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Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional agenda and annotations

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Annotations

1. Election of officers

Rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council provides that, at the commencement of the first meeting of a regular session, the United Nations Forum on Forests shall elect, from among the representatives of its members, a Chairperson and such other officers as may be required (see E/5975/Rev.1). According to Council resolution 2000/35, by which it established the Forum, the Bureau of the Forum shall consist of a Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons, one of whom shall also act as Rapporteur, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Council, by its decision 2007/273, decided that, commencing with the eighth session of the Forum, the officers elected to the Bureau would hold office for a term of two years.

On 27 April 2007, at the first meeting of its eighth session, the Forum elected Modesto Fernández (Cuba), Arvids Ozols (Latvia) and Abdellah Benmellouk (Morocco) as members of the Bureau for the eighth session of the Forum. It postponed the election of the members from the regional groups of Asian States and Western European and Other States Groups, as well as the Chairperson and the Rapporteur, to a later meeting. Since the first meeting, the secretariat of the Forum has received the following nominations for the remaining positions on the Bureau:

(a) Boen M. Purnama (Indonesia) on behalf of the Group of Asian States;

(b) Glen Kile (Australia) on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group.

The Forum may wish to elect the above-mentioned persons to the Bureau of the eighth session of the Forum. The Forum may also wish to elect Mr. Purnama (Indonesia) as Chairperson, and Mr. Ozols (Latvia) as Rapporteur for the eighth session.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

In accordance with rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum shall, at the beginning of the session, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda.

Documentation

Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.18/2009/1)

3. Achieving the four global objectives on forests and implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests

The General Assembly, by resolution 62/98, adopted the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. The multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015, adopted at its seventh session (see resolution 7/1, annex, paras. 1 (a) (ii), (iii) and (c)), provided that at each session, the Forum would focus, inter alia, on progress towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests and implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests; and that it would have as its main task a discussion on the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding

instrument on all types of forests. A report of the Secretary-General is prepared to facilitate the deliberations of the Forum.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on achieving the four global objectives on forests and implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (E/CN.18/2009/2)

4. Regional and subregional inputs

By paragraph 2 (c) of its resolution 2006/49, the Economic and Social Council added a new principal function to strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Council invited forest-related regional and subregional bodies, mechanisms and processes to strengthen collaboration and to provide input to the work of the Forum. The Forum, by its resolution 7/1 (annex, para. 1 (f) (iii)), decided to provide an interactive platform for dialogue with regional and subregional forest-related and other relevant processes, mechanisms, instruments and organizations. The Forum may wish to consider the report of the Secretary-General as a basis for convening such a dialogue.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2009/3)

5. Forests in a changing environment:

(a) Forests and climate change;

(b) Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries;

(c) Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas

Under the multi-year programme of work, adopted at its seventh session (resolution 7/1), the Forum decided to consider, at its eighth session, sub-items (a), (b) and (c) of agenda item 5 within its overall theme of "Forests in a changing environment". The deliberations on the specific topics, namely, (a) Forests and climate change; (b) Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries; and (c) Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas, would be within the context of the main task of the Forum session as well as the cross-cutting issues and common agenda items as listed in the multi-year programme of work. The Forum has before it three separate reports of the Secretary-General for consideration.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on forests and climate change (E/CN.18/2009/4)

Report of the Secretary-General on reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries (E/CN.18/2009/5)

Report of the Secretary-General on forests and biodiversity conservation including protected areas (E/CN.18/2009/6)

Note by the secretariat on forests in a changing environment: low forest cover countries, small island developing States and high and medium forest cover countries (E/CN.18/2009/7)

Report of the Secretary-General on recommendations for addressing key challenges of forests in a changing environment (E/CN.18/2009/8)

6. Means of implementation for sustainable forest management:

(a) Applying means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technology;

(b) Decision on a voluntary global financial mechanism, a portfolio approach and a forest financing framework

According to the multi-year programme of work of the Forum, adopted at its seventh session (resolution 7/1), the second overall theme of the session is "Means of implementation for sustainable forest management". The provisional agenda for the eighth session, adopted by the Economic and Social Council (decision 2007/277), has further classified this item into two sub-items, namely, (a) Applying means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technology; and (b) Decision on a voluntary global financial mechanism, a portfolio approach and a forest financing framework.

It may be noted that "means of implementation" is one of the cross-cutting issues that will be a recurrent item for each session and that the Economic and Social Council, through its resolution 2007/40 entitled "Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests", has specifically decided to develop and consider, with a view to adopting at the eighth session of the Forum, a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework for all types of forests. The Forum may wish to consider a report of the Secretary-General in the deliberation of this agenda item. As mandated by the same Council resolution, the Forum convened an open-ended ad hoc expert group meeting to develop proposals for the development of a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework in Vienna from 10 to 14 November 2008. The outcome of the Expert Group meeting in the form of a Chair's summary has been submitted for consideration by the Forum at the current session.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on finance and other means of implementation for sustainable forest management (E/CN.18/2009/9)

Chair's summary report of the meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework (E/CN.18/2009/11)

7. Multi-stakeholder dialogue

The Forum has valued public participation in its work and has incorporated multi-stakeholder dialogues, involving the nine major groups identified in Agenda 21, in its multi-year programme of work. At each session since its second session in 2002, the Forum has been organizing multi-stakeholder dialogue, providing a platform for exchange of ideas and information between Member States and major groups on the Forum's work. The secretariat maintains constant contacts and continued consultations with major groups on the planning of the multi-stakeholder dialogues. It has been suggested that the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the eighth session be focused on seeking multi-stakeholder perspectives on the specific agenda items of the session. In preparing for the multi-stakeholder dialogue, the Forum may wish to consider a note by the secretariat and discussion papers submitted by major groups.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat on the multi-stakeholder dialogue (E/CN.18/2009/13 and addenda), transmitting the discussion papers contributed by various major groups

8. Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

At its first session in 2001, the Forum decided to develop and maintain contacts, cooperate and make active efforts to develop synergies with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as other relevant international and regional processes and organizations, institutions and instruments. The Forum may wish to recall that the Collaborative Partnership on Forests was formed in 2001 in response to a call from the Council (see resolution 2000/35, para. 3 (b)) to support the work of the Forum and to enhance cooperation and coordination among participants of the Partnership. As a result, the Partnership was established with the secretariats of 14 forest-related organizations, institutions and instruments, including the Forum secretariat. The latter also provides secretariat support to the Partnership, which is chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/49, decided to strengthen the international arrangement on forests, re-emphasized the significance of the Partnership to the work of the Forum and reaffirmed that the Partnership would receive guidance from the Forum on its supportive role to the Forum.

The Partnership has been actively engaged in several initiatives in support of the work of the Forum. The Forum has before it for its consideration a report of the Secretary-General on this agenda item and an information document on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2008 and 2009. The Forum may wish to consider approaches for further enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination and providing guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2009/10)

Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2008 and 2009: information document (E/CN.18/2009/12)

9. The Forum Trust Fund

With a view to ensuring transparency, the Forum, in its resolution 7/1 on its multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015, requested the Forum secretariat to report at each session on the operation of the Forum Trust Fund, including on the amount and source of contributions and a description of how funds have been expended. The Forum may wish to consider a note by the secretariat on the Trust Fund and provide further support for its strengthening.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat on the Trust Fund (E/CN.18/2009/15)

10. Dates and venue for the ninth session of the Forum

The Forum shall decide upon the dates and venue for the ninth session.

11. Provisional agenda for the ninth session of the Forum

The Forum shall recommend to the Economic and Social Council for adoption a provisional agenda for the ninth session.

12. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its eighth session

In accordance with rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum shall submit to the Council a report on the work of its session.

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United Nations Forum on Forests
Eighth session
New York, 20 April-1 May 2009
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Achieving the four global objectives on forests and implementing the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is intended to facilitate the Forum's consideration of progress made in the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument), as well as in reaching the global objectives on forests. The short time that has elapsed since the adoption of the forest instrument limited the opportunity of countries to initiate new actions. Nevertheless, the reports received provided valuable insights into action taken and progress made by countries in implementing the forest instrument.

The responses suggest the forest instrument has considerable potential to achieve its set objectives. However, countries have identified a number of areas that need to be addressed more efficiently in order to realize this potential. These include pressure on limited forest resources, missing valuation of forest products and ecosystem services, inadequate financial resources, lack of appropriate capacities, institutions and effective governance. It is also noteworthy that a number of countries find national forest programmes to be the main vehicle of implementing the forest instrument. It was also noted that several of the provisions of the forest instrument are being implemented as a result of initiatives taken before the adoption of the instrument.

The experiences drawn from the current reporting exercise also allowed for the identification of areas for methodological development in preparation of the review called for by the Forum decision on the multi-year programme of work. The report presents a set of recommendations in this regard.

* E/CN.18/2009/1.

** The delay in the issuance of the present note was due to the need to include updated information.

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I. Introduction

1. At its seventh session the United Nations Forum on Forests agreed on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument) that was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2007 as resolution 62/98. The Forum also adopted resolution 7/1 on its new multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015. The outcome of the seventh session opened a new era in the international forest policy process with the strongest ever focus on implementation and actions on the ground.

2. The main purpose of the forest instrument is to strengthen political commitment and action at all levels to implement effectively sustainable management of all types of forests and to achieve the shared global objectives on forests; to enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals; and to provide a framework for national action and international cooperation.[1]

3. Mindful of the purpose of the forest instrument, the Forum decided, in its resolution 7/1, that the main task for each session would be a discussion on the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the forest instrument. In doing so, the Forum would also focus on progress made towards the achievement of sustainable forest management, as well as on the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and previous resolutions adopted by the Forum.

4. The Economic and Social Council, in decision 2007/277 on the provisional agenda for the eighth session of the Forum, to be held in 2008, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report to facilitate the above-mentioned discussion. The present report intends to summarize the most recent information from various sources and to provide the first evaluation on progress made since the adoption of the forest instrument.

5. It being recognized that, according to resolution 7/1, the ninth session of the Forum in 2011 will have to assess the overall progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests, and that the Secretary-General has been requested to prepare analytical consolidated reports to that end, the present paper also offers a series of actions for the consideration of the Forum to facilitate the preparations for that assessment. These recommendations are based also on the experiences gained in the course of the preparation of this report.

6. While a wealth of information is available on the state of the forest resources, in particular, the *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005* and the *State of the World's Forests* series, of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), information on actions and developments related to the forest instrument is much more scarce. The reasons for that include the fact that the forest instrument was only adopted in December 2007 and it is expected that there will be a natural time lag between the adoption of the instrument at the global level and its integration into national forest policies and programmes and eventual implementation. Thus, there was very limited time available for countries to take specific actions to implement the forest instrument and to monitor progress.

[1] General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex, para. 1.

7. In resolution 7/1, the Forum decided that countries should, on a voluntary basis, submit national reports on progress made in implementing the forest instrument and on progress towards the global objectives, according to a timetable established by the Forum.[2] However, no timetable was established prior to the eighth session of the Forum.

8. In the absence of defined reporting requirements, the secretariat developed a suggested format and invited countries to use the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on progress as an opportunity to voluntarily share the most recent national information on implementing the forest instrument and on the progress being made towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests.

9. The logical basis for the format for gathering country information was the 25 national policies and measures and 19 action items related to international cooperation identified in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the forest instrument. In order to keep the information request within reasonable limits, these policies and measures were further grouped into 13 thematic clusters (see table below). These clusters were also used in other analytical works, including the mapping of financial resources needed for the implementation of the forest instrument.

Clusters of the forest instrument

Reference No.	*Cluster*	*Non-legally binding instrument*
	1. Cross-cutting thematic clusters	
1. 1A	Strengthening political commitment for sustainable forest management	6a, 6c, 6d, 6k, 6l, 7a, 7c
2. 1B	Financing sustainable forest management	6h, 6i, 6m, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e
3. 1C	Capacity-building and technology transfer	6e, 6s, 6v, 7f, 7i, 7j, 7k, 7l, 7m
4. 1D	Stakeholder participation	6h, 6m, 6v, 6w, 6x, 6y, 7k
5. 1E	Enhanced international cooperation	7i, 7n, 7q, 7r, 7s
	2. Topical thematic clusters	
6. 2A	Forest law enforcement and governance	6n, 7h, 7i, 7j
7. 2B	International trade in forest products	6j, 6x, 7g, 7h, 7i, 7j
8. 2C	Protection of forests	6o, 6p, 6q
9. 2D	Science and research	6r, 6s, 7n, 7o, 7p
10. 2E	Public awareness and education	6t, 6u, 6v, 7j

[2] E/CN.18/2007/277, resolution 7/1, annex, para 17.

Reference No.	*Cluster*	*Non-legally binding instrument*
11. 2F	Private sector and industry	6e, 6h, 6i, 6m, 6w, 6x, 7a, 7f, 7k, 7m
12. 2G	Indigenous and local communities	6f, 6h, 6s, 6v, 6y, 7k
13. 2H	Monitoring, assessment and reporting	6b, 6g, 8, 9

10. At the time of completing the present report, voluntary national information had been submitted by 16 Member States, while 3 additional national reports had been received in a free format. In addition, the inputs provided by 29 regional and subregional entities in response to the survey conducted by the secretariat were also considered in the preparation of the report.

11. The national reports that were available at the time of writing were published at the Forum website (http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff8.html#memberstates). While the number of responses remained relatively limited, they proved to be extremely useful and gave an indication of the broad range of actions being undertaken in the countries. In addition, the preparation of the current report was further supported by information from other sources, such as the inputs of regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes. These are also available on the Forum website (http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff8.html#regions).

II. Progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument

12. According to the voluntary reports, several Member States found that the forest instrument offered a unique opportunity to generate a strong political commitment for the promotion of sustainable forest management. Many of them concluded that the broad principles of the forest instrument were already embedded in their existing policies and legislation. In those countries, the forest instrument had not been formally recognized through any new legal or policy document. Rather, its elements had been considered and incorporated into existing policy and programme frameworks.

13. During the short period of time elapsed since the adoption of the forest instrument, some countries have started translating its text into their official languages and promoting awareness. Several countries also have expressed, especially through respective regional organizations and processes, high-level political commitment to the implementation of the instrument and to the four global objectives. A number of countries referred to their national forest programme as a framework for implementing the forest instrument, in particular in protecting and expanding forests.

14. It was noted in many responses that the time since the seventh session, and especially the adoption by the General Assembly, had been relatively short to achieve operational results in time-consuming policy and legal processes. Some developing countries with forests that are under tremendous pressure from such factors as rapid population growth and an expanding demand for products, for

example, charcoal and fuelwood, cautioned that it was very difficult to launch implementation programmes in the absence of strong policy and legislative frameworks.

15. The following sections include a detailed analysis of country responses, based on the 13 clusters of the forest instrument.

A. Strengthening political commitment to sustainable forest management (1A)

16. Many countries saw this cluster of recommendations and actions as the key to implementing sustainable forest management. In a number of cases, multifaceted approaches were adopted to engender political commitment. These included different strategic plans as well as national forest programmes. In other cases, political commitment was reached through development and adoption of new legislation. The process was accompanied by public awareness campaigns in order to guarantee broad stakeholder participation and public support.

17. Depending on national conditions and circumstances, instead of initiating work on stand-alone sectoral programmes, the provisions of the forest instrument were used for updating the existing matrix of policies, plans and initiatives developed over time, which together serve as a framework for action. Some developing countries attached increased importance to sustainable forest management through rural development policies and legislations, giving it an important role in providing livelihoods, diversifying income, while protecting the environment, including biodiversity, water resources, etc.

18. On the one hand, some members of the donor community reported on initiatives aimed at leveraging bilateral and multilateral assistance towards sustainable forest management to help build domestic capacity in recipient countries and support policy processes. On the other hand, some developing countries cautioned that, in the absence of national forest policies, programmes, adequate legislation, institutions and information, or the combination of these, there was little hope for successful implementation.

B. Financing sustainable forest management (1B)

19. The reports underlined the importance of funding in the support of sustainable forest management and stressed the inadequacy of the current level of financial resources. In terms of a framework for funding, most countries saw it linked to national forest programmes, with the national budget providing the bulk of the resources. While government funding remained the principal source of financing for sustainable forest management, there have been growing attempts to tap other sources. Some countries have set up specific forest funds to support sustainable management activities, such as infrastructure development and forest regeneration.

20. State forests in many countries were managed for multiple purposes, including the provision of social and environmental benefits to the society. However, many of these environmental and social outputs did not have a place in the market and therefore, the State needed to continue to fund them. The reports from donor

countries indicated that official development assistance was largely focused on capacity-building and forest law enforcement.

21. Countries also provided information about efforts and initiatives to mobilize greater private funding for sustainable forest management. Measures introduced to encourage such investment included special tax exempt or reduction and low-interest loans. It was also reported that, under certain circumstances, free market signals seemed efficient in encouraging private sector investment. Some new financial contributions, mostly in the context of climate change, including the Cool Earth Partnership and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank, were also recognized as cooperating actively with developing country efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse emissions and thereby promoting sustainable forest management.

C. Capacity-building and technology transfer (1C)

22. A number of countries highlighted the importance of capacity-building and technology transfer in achieving sustainable forest management and noted that a multitude of actions would be needed. Focus areas included: reforming and updating the legislative and policy frameworks; launching education and training programmes for different target audiences; developing information collection and communication systems; and strengthening research on a broad range of subjects, including sustainable forest management, sound use of wood, ecosystem services, etc.

23. Some donor countries reported on funding regional and bilateral education and training programmes. Countries affected by illegal harvesting and trade also started to adopt new technologies for tracking timber movement.

24. Several countries that had adopted national forest programmes noted that activities related to capacity-building and technology transfer were planned and implemented within that framework.

D. Stakeholder participation (1D)

25. Having recognized the importance of stakeholder participation, many countries implemented measures to promote closer cooperation and consultation in policy and legislative development, forest management planning, and, in some cases, in training and education. New policy initiatives increasingly recognized the role of civil society in the protection, conservation, management and sustainable development of environment and natural resources.

26. Some countries have explicit provisions in their national forest programmes to promote stakeholder involvement. These include support to the development and activities of private forest owner associations, associations of small forest owners, and public-private partnerships between State agencies and private enterprises or forest owner organizations.

27. Some donors used bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the latter especially through FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization, to promote greater community involvement, as well as technical and scientific support to sustainable forest management in developing countries. In some countries with unevenly

developed regions special attention was paid to assist disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

E. Enhanced international cooperation (1E)

28. In recent years, new efforts towards greater international cooperation have emerged in many parts of the world with the realization that some of the problems, as well as opportunities related to sustainable forest management, could not be confined within national boundaries. The issues addressed through such cooperation include the role of forests in climate change, water supply, natural hazards, as well as support for sustainable forest management initiatives in developing countries.

29. Regional and subregional cooperation has grown considerably in the recent past, covering a broad range of issues contained in the forest instrument. Working in regional groups has also helped to reinforce national efforts to promote sustainable management of forests in many regions, as well as promoting the development and application of practical management tools, such as criteria and indicators. A detailed description of relevant regional cooperative activities can be found in the report of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2009/3).

F. Forest law enforcement and governance (2A)

30. Illegal and unsustainable activities, including conversion of land and harvesting of wood and non-wood products, are among the main reasons for continued deforestation and forest degradation. Major efforts have been undertaken to deal with these problems, both in producer and consumer countries. While timber-producing countries have taken steps to control illegal logging, timber-importing countries have been taking further steps to deal with the problem by adopting legislation aimed at halting the import and trade of illegally sourced timber. As a result, a number of countries have introduced timber procurement schemes with the aim of ensuring that only legally harvested timber is used. They are also working to encourage certification and licensing for the exportation and shipping of wood and wood products.

31. Donor countries have given high priority to funding projects and providing technical support to combat illegal logging and illegal trade. The 2003 European Union Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, which involves several countries, focuses on governance reforms and capacity-building, to ensure that timber exported to the European Union comes only from legal sources. Most reporting countries were focusing on certification and verification schemes to prove that material is sourced from legal and well-managed forests.

G. International trade in forest products (2B)

32. Reporting countries recognized the importance of trade for sustainable forest management. The relevant provisions of the forest instrument focus on two areas: the legality and traceability of trade and trade flows, and the valuation of goods and services from forests.

33. Actions taken in the first area have several elements in common with those on governance and law enforcement. These include promotion of certification, revision of the criteria used in certification standards, and measures aimed at combating illegal logging and associated trade. Regional entities have been focusing on developing measures to curb such activities, while some donors have been supporting such efforts with technical aid. A number of other donor countries have funded projects aimed at addressing illegal activities related to forests.

34. The reports indicated much less development in the other area, that is, valuing the full range of products and services and internalizing the externalities from forests. An exception to this is the development related to the recognition of the role of forests in mitigating climate change. Several country-level and regional markets have evolved in the past several years as a result of the evolving climate change regime.[3]

H. Protection of forests (2C)

35. Reflecting the need for forest protection, many Member States have taken action to expand the protected forest areas in their countries. Protective measures are often concerned with the protection of forest biological diversity. Actions taken represent a broad spectrum, from encouraging voluntary measures by landowners to protect unique sites and habitats, to protecting almost all native forests by legislation. Some countries with federal structures have signed agreements with States to ensure conservation and sustainable management of native forests.

36. Other measures were aimed at the creation of interconnected protected area networks or green corridors, facilitating monitoring and research of natural processes in forest ecosystems, and helping to adapt forest stands to changing climate. Several actions were taken to develop an effective system of forest fire monitoring and oppression, as well as to implement preventive measures against forest fires. Monitoring and research on forest pests and diseases and their impact on forest ecosystems were also emphasized in the reports.

I. Science and research (2D)

37. Forest research covered a broad range of issues, and although several activities started before the adoption of the forest instrument, they are fully in line with the relevant provisions. Research activities ranged from tree genetics to developing new and improved products and processes to maximize the value from timber and to developing environmentally sustainable and economically viable production and treatment regimes. Achieving a greater understanding of environmental sustainability and the integration of forestry in multiple land-use policies and programmes were also mentioned as important challenges. Substantive research has been undertaken on adaptation of forest species to climate change.

38. Many countries have taken action to strengthen the capacity of national and regional research institutions, and to improve economic, legal, institutional and information instruments to strengthen technological development, innovations and

[3] Further information can be found in the report of the Secretary-General on forests and climate change (E/CN.18/2009/4).

the transfer of knowledge into practice. Since most of the research organizations are under public ownership, funding of those efforts has been through either the national budget or international sources.

39. Among the international efforts mentioned, the financial support provided for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Global Forest Expert Panels (formerly entitled Joint Initiative on Science and Technology) was also noted. With this support, the initiative developed a comprehensive report on adaptation to climate change, which contributes to the Forum's deliberations as a background document.

J. Public awareness and education (2E)

40. Actions on public awareness and education have taken many forms in the reporting countries. Formal forestry education is based in specialized colleges and universitie many of the countries. The courses are designed with increasing focus on sustainability and related emerging forestry issues. Several of the educational programmes are aimed at forest owners with no formal forestry education and many institutions are heavily engaged in different extension programmes.

41. Promoting awareness plays a critical role in forestry; countries are therefore giving increasing attention to getting the public to understand the role of forests and forestry and thereby promote the idea of sustainable forest management. Some countries have a forest or forestry day or week with visibility events involving the broader community and especially the youth, and which receives broad coverage in the written and electronic media. Some others maintain awareness-raising campaigns, for example, on forest fires and other forest-related issues, and arrange for exhibitions, films, magazine articles, provide information material and run visitor centres. In achieving these, aims countries are now resorting more and more to modern technology, such as dedicated web pages.

K. Private sector and industry (2F)

42. The increasing recognition of the role of the private sector in achieving sustainable forest management is reflected in the reports of many countries. Substantive support is provided to private forest owners associations, voluntary associations of small forest land owners and public-private partnerships with participation of forest-related enterprises in a number of them. In some countries, tax concessions have been granted in order to boost domestic timber sales. In some cases, both income and corporate taxes have been reduced to support installation of more efficient wood-processing technologies. At the same time, corporate taxes for investing in foreign plantation establishments have also been reduced.

43. In some countries, there is very little government ownership or involvement in commercial forestry. In these cases, the Government is seen as the provider, through legislation, of an enabling environment that encourages private business development in a sustainable manner.

L. Indigenous and local communities (2G)

44. The reports provided insight into efforts of countries to support indigenous and local communities. Most of them offer special treatment to these groups. Options range from simple and practical measures, such as providing firewood in winter, to more conceptual solutions, including the promotion of participation in planning and decision-making processes. In some countries, the programmes encompass several activities, such as the creation of new industries through utilization of locally available materials, cultures, traditions, etc. Some other Governments have set up funding mechanisms to develop appropriate frameworks to preserve traditional knowledge about nature and require both central and regional governments to consult widely with the public when environmental policy decisions are made. Some countries have specific programmes to alleviate poverty in indigenous communities.

45. Donor countries also underlined the need to prioritize measures for improving the conditions of indigenous people. In some countries, actions aimed at indigenous and local communities find further support in the broader rural or regional development context.

M. Monitoring, assessment and reporting (2H)

46. The forest instrument underlined the importance of monitoring, assessment and reporting in the achievement of its objectives and considered those activities an integral part of efforts towards sustainable forest management. In spite of this fact, only a few countries reported on related developments. Most of the activities undertaken were related to the criteria and indicator processes, as well as to the programmes and projects of international organizations dealing with data collection and analysis. Some countries mentioned a weak information base and a lack of data among the main obstacles to strategic planning and efficient implementation.

47. The role of monitoring, assessment and reporting was also emphasized in the context of law enforcement, trade and forest protection. The respective paragraphs above provide further information on related activities.

III. Progress made in achieving the four global objectives on forests

48. In spite of the limited time since the adoption of the forest instrument, some countries had taken specific actions to achieve the four global objectives, such as enacting relevant legislation or taking other specific policy initiatives. Others placed new emphasis on the forest instrument in their existing legal and policy frameworks. Commitments to the forest instrument and the four global objectives have also been underlined by decisions and actions of regional and subregional entities, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, comprising 10 countries, or the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, consisting of 47 countries.

49. Due to obvious linkages between the implementation of the forest instrument and progress made towards the global objectives on forests, much of the information provided in the previous section is relevant for and reflected in the following paragraphs.

A. Global objective 1: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation

50. The most recent available statistics show a continuous decline of global forest cover over the past two decades.[4] During the period 2000-2005, the annual loss was 13 million hectares. However, through reforestation and afforestation and the establishment of forest plantations totalling 5.7 million hectares per year, the annual net loss of global forest cover was estimated at 7.3 million hectares. A detailed analysis of the issue is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries (E/CN.18/2009/5).

51. Country responses show that the forest instrument had provided new impetus to a number of them to address the loss of forest cover. Several countries took action to maintain and expand forest cover under existing policies and legislation; others were relying on national forest programmes to help achieve success in this area. In addition to developing afforestation and reforestation programmes, countries affected by illegal logging and other unsustainable practices launched initiatives to address these problems specifically. Donor countries engaged in new technical cooperation projects, provided funding and worked with regional organizations to help recipient countries to expand their forest cover.

52. Although forest degradation is obviously an important component of the deterioration of the global forest cover, this phenomenon has hardly been mentioned in national reports, which suggests that more attention should be paid to this complex problem.

B. Global objective 2: enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people

53. This has been a key objective of many reporting countries, especially those with large numbers of forest-dependent people. Most of them have been promoting the objective under existing policies, legislation and programmes. The focus of forest policy in general has been to increase economic and social benefits from the state forests and to encourage appropriate development in regions. However, success at the national level is significantly dependent on the implementation of policies relating to other sectors as well. This integrated nature has made it difficult to isolate the solutions to forestry.

54. A major obstacle has been the lack of proper valuation of a range of forest goods and services. Some countries have been attempting to fill this void; their calculations showed that the social benefits of forests attributable to recreation, tourism, water production from boreholes and springs and improvements in agricultural yields due to soil conservation, were several fold higher than the value of timber sales. It is difficult, however, to establish the place in the market for these goods and services.

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[4] FAO, *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005*.

C. Global objective 3: increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

55. Countries reported having taken a variety of approaches to increase the area of protected forests, as noted above. Some have used stricter management planning, while others have promoted certification. Countries have also declared new areas as protected forests. Some donor countries reported on provision of funding to help developing countries to expand and intensify protection of forest areas.

56. With regard to the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests, some importing countries have attempted to address the matter through timber-procurement schemes to ensure that only sustainably managed or legally harvested timber is used. At the same time, timber producers have increasingly adopted timber certification schemes to ensure that their wood products come from sustainably managed forests.

D. Global objective 4: reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management

57. The report of the Secretary-General on finance and other means of implementation for sustainable forest management (E/CN.18/2009/9), and the note by the secretariat on financing for sustainable forest management: mobilizing financial resources to support the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and to promote sustainable forest management (E/CN.18/2008/2) provide the most comprehensive description of the financial flows in the forest sector including official development assistance. It should be noted, however, that serious information gaps exist and fully comprehensive data on official development assistance flows for sustainable forest management or other forms of funding for forestry are currently not available.

58. Not every responding country provided information related to this objective. Some reporting countries were newly emerging aid donors who were still in the process of setting objectives and mechanisms. Some of the major donors have maintained their funding for forestry and have supported a new climate change-related multilateral funding mechanism which covers some aspects of sustainable forest management. Others focused attention on supporting efforts towards law enforcement and governance in developing countries.

IV. Future reporting

59. Based on the tasks of the future sessions of the Forum laid down in the multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015, a major challenge in the coming years will be reporting on the status of sustainable forest management worldwide and on progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument,

including the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the proposals of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests for action and the previous resolutions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. In addition, the sessions of the Forum will address a number of important themes and critical issues, including means of implementation, forest law enforcement and governance, and regional and subregional inputs, among others. Consequently, innovative approaches will be needed to prevent the reporting burden on Member States from growing.

60. Voluntary national reports will be particularly relevant for the ninth session in 2011 and the eleventh session in 2015. For the ninth session, the Secretary-General has been requested to prepare, in consultation with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, an analytical consolidated report on overall progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument, and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests. The Secretary-General has also been requested to prepare a similar report for the eleventh session of the Forum which will further include an assessment of the international arrangement on forests and the contribution of forests to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

61. The measuring of progress would require a set of indicators that are objective, reliable and feasible to report on. In this respect, priority should be given to using indicators from existing reporting processes, as these are most likely to meet the above criteria. The secretariat analysed the major reporting processes and found that while a wealth of information is available from them there are considerable gaps remaining.

62. The broadest thematic coverage is provided by the FAO *Forest Resources Assessment*, which comprises an extremely rich set of information describing the physical conditions of forest resources and it could provide a sound basis for measuring progress made in reaching the global objectives, in particular, the first three. Selected indicators from regional criteria and indicator processes could complement the *Forest Resources Assessment* dataset, but their global applicability has yet to be investigated.

63. The global objectives are very complex and encapsulate several conceptual elements; therefore, measuring progress also requires a complex set of indicators. A good example of this complexity is reflected by global objective 1, which includes the concepts of deforestation, sustainable forest management and forest degradation. While deforestation is sufficiently covered through the indicators describing the change in forest area, considerably less information is available on forest degradation, due to several reasons, including the conceptual difficulties surrounding the definition of the term itself.[5] The other objectives, being more complex in nature, represent even bigger challenges to monitor.

64. The secretariat analysis revealed that even more serious information gaps exist in available indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the forest instrument. There is only one thematic cluster (2C. Forest protection) which is

[5] Led by FAO, a new initiative has been launched within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to address terminology and methodology issues related to forest degradation. The initiative will present its findings at the thirteenth World Forestry Congress and the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009.

adequately covered, indicators are available to a limited extent only for the others, and in some cases are almost completely missing.

65. The FAO *Forest Resources Assessment* indicators have the advantage that they can be seen as the only comprehensive global criteria and indicators process covering all member States of the Forum. Indicators from the other criteria and indicators process could be used, to the extent possible, in preparing for the review at the ninth session of the Forum. A continued methodological development, conducted in cooperation with FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization, other relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests as well as criteria and indicator processes, could lead to an expanded set of indicators that can be incorporated in future *Forest Resources Assessment* exercises and used in the review of effectiveness due at the eleventh session.

66. In reviewing the opportunities and challenges arising from the adoption of the forest instrument and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Strategic Dialogue in February 2008 concluded that recent developments required new emphasis on reporting and associated capacity-building. Partnership members agreed on a number of measures in this regard including revitalizing the Partnership's Joint Initiative on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting, harmonizing monitoring, assessment and reporting activities along the lines of the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management,[6] bolstering support to criteria and indicator processes, enhance cooperation on the national level and build upon and strengthen the joint forest sector questionnaire on forest products and the *Forest Resources Assessment* process.[7]

67. It is important to note that, although reviewing progress is a task for every session of the Forum, biennial reporting of quantitative indicators is not very meaningful, since the frequency of collection of data is normally much lower: about 10 years accompanied with five-year midterm updates. Moreover, annual and biennial reporting often provide inconclusive data for recording trends or shifts in trends. In this regard, the timing built into the *Forest Resources Assessment* process fits perfectly with the Forum's reporting requirements. The *Forest Resources Assessment* 2010 could feed directly into the reporting to the ninth session in 2011. Consideration should be given to how FAO could help with preliminary results of the *Forest Resources Assessment* 2015 update in preparing for the eleventh session, which will review the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and the forest instrument, and consider all options for the future.

68. The proximity and similar frequency of the sessions of the Forum and the FAO Committee on Forestry give way to new synergies. One of the FAO flagship forestry publications, the biennial *State of the World's Forests* is traditionally launched at Committee on Forestry sessions, with the aim of facilitating informed discussions. The publication's intention is to draw a comprehensive picture on the status of forests and forestry worldwide, with each issue having a specific thematic focus.

69. In the year of the adoption of the forest instrument, the *State of the World's Forests 2007* focused on progress towards sustainable forest management, putting

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[6] United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 4/3, para. 6; E/CN.18/2004/17.

[7] Summary report: Collaborative Partnership on Forests Strategic Dialogue, section 5. http://www.fao.org/forestry/media/14657/1/0/.

more emphasis on the supply side, that is, forest resources. Therefore, this publication, together with the dataset in *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005*, can be considered as a reliable baseline for future assessments of progress. The next issue of the *State of the World's Forests* attempts to address the demand side, assessing the likely impacts of current developments on forests, such as population, economic development and globalization, and considers how forestry will have to adapt for the future.[8] Careful programming would allow the future editions of the *State of the World's Forests* to also address the overall themes of the Forum's session in that year. By doing so, the publication could provide an account on general progress towards sustainable forest management and serve high-level international discussions at two forums.

70. Based on the preceding discussion the most practical approach, at least in the short term, through the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2011, would be to separate national reporting into two parts. Reporting on the four global objectives on forests should be quantifiable, using existing indicators where possible and developing a few new indicators, including for the fourth global objective, while the reporting on most of the forest instrument would be qualitative in nature. The biennial discussion on progress could be based on the input from the respective issue of the *State of the World's Forests*, as well as the summary of the voluntary national reports prepared for that session.

71. The review of progress at the ninth and eleventh sessions of the Forum could be based on:

- An enhanced set of indicators (quantifiable information) related to the global objectives, derived from existing reporting processes, in particular the *Forest Resources Assessment*, and supplemented by voluntary national reports;
- Qualitative information related to the implementation of the forest instrument, obtained through voluntary national reports prepared for those sessions;
- Other existing sources of information, including from members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, criteria and indicator processes, as well as relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes.

V. Conclusions

72. **Although only a limited number of country responses were available for supporting the preparation of the present report and the sample is too limited for drawing far-reaching conclusions, the reports, nevertheless, provided valuable information on implementation and progress.**

73. **From the responses and the information gleaned from regional inputs, it is evident that countries have a positive outlook on the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests therein, as a basis for promoting sustainable forest management. The responses suggest that the forest instrument has considerable potential to achieve its set objectives.**

[8] FAO: *State of the World's Forests 2009*, Foreword, paras. 2 and 4. Manuscript courtesy of FAO.

74. A number of countries referred to new or updated national forest programmes as the main policy tool to translate the forest instrument into national conditions and serve as the main vehicle for implementation. In several cases, the ongoing processes aimed at the implementation of the forest instrument actually started before its adoption, clearly reflecting that the forest instrument embraces the results of the outcomes of preceding international negotiations.

75. Some countries provided information on the successful integration of forestry agendas with other development policies, in particular rural development, thereby contributing to the integrated development of remote and left-behind regions. It was also noted that implementation of forestry programmes is closely linked to and influenced by implementation of related major strategic programmes. Several responses stressed the close connection to developments in the area of climate change.

76. At the same time, responses also showed that there are major challenges that need to be addressed in order to achieve the aims of the forest instrument. Some of the countries were struggling to retain the existing forest cover under heavy population and related pressures in the absence of effective legal and policy frameworks or adequate funding sources. Inadequate financial resources, weak law enforcement and governance, deficiencies of the institutional framework, lack of valuation of forest goods and services, information, research and technology transfer were identified as main obstacles to implementation. Successful implementation of the forest instrument including achievement of the global objectives, is subject to the removal of these impediments.

77. The analysis of the voluntary national contributions also allowed for the drawing of conclusions and the development of recommendations for future reporting, in particular, in preparing for the review at the ninth and eleventh sessions of the Forum.

78. While a wealth of information is already available from different sources, in particular, in member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and in regional criteria and indicator processes, further work is needed to select and develop appropriate indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the forest instrument. Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests could further harmonize major reporting processes and provide as much of the needed information as possible from existing sources and processes.

79. Since monitoring the implementation of the forest instrument requires qualitative information not available elsewhere, it is important that the Forum establishes timetables for reporting on such information, as stipulated in paragraph 17 of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015.

VI. Recommendations

80. Noting also the analyses provided in the reports of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2009/3), on issues of forests in a

changing environment (E/CN.18/2009/4, E/CN.18/2009/5 and E/CN.18/2009/6) and on finance and other means of implementation for sustainable forest management (E/CN.18/2009/9), as well as the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on recommendations for addressing key challenges of forests in a changing environment (E/CN.18/2009/8), the Forum may wish to:

(a) Note the magnitude of problems that some countries or group of countries face in implementing the forest instrument and underline the need to specifically address those problems;

(b) Invite Member States to increase efforts to use the forest instrument as the main policy tool for integrating sustainable forest management into national development policies;

(c) Invite Member States to consider intersessional activities in support of the implementation of the forest instrument;

(d) Invite the donor community, as well as members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to give priority in their programmes and actions to support aimed at removing obstacles to the implementation of the forest instrument;

(e) Call for enhanced global and regional, as well as interregional and intraregional cooperation to address key impediments and invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support those initiatives.

81. **The Forum may further wish to:**

(a) Establish a timetable for voluntary national reporting for the ninth session of the Forum;

(b) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its efforts in harmonizing forest-related reporting, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the forest instrument and the progress towards the achievement of the global objectives on forests;

(c) Request the secretariat to develop synergies, with relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as criteria and indicator processes and other regional and subregional processes, to prepare consolidated analytical reports, and further request the secretariat to engage in collaboration and cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in this regard;

(d) Consider intersessional work in support of streamlining forest-related reporting and increasing national capacities to contribute to the review at the ninth session.

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Regional and subregional inputs

Regional and subregional inputs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Regional and subregional involvement in forest-related activities has been growing progressively and is reflected in an increasing number of unique and diverse initiatives among regions. While many priorities and challenges in sustainable forest management are commonly shared, the individual nature of forests, and specific economic circumstances and political will, within each regional and subregional entity,[a] strongly influence the manner in which those entities interact with the United Nations Forum on Forests and address sustainable forest management.

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/49, had decided to strengthen the Forum's interaction with regional entities. Subsequently, the Forum, in its resolution 7/1 of 27 April 2007, had invited regional and subregional entities to submit their inputs on experiences, challenges and advancements in addressing the issues in the Forum's agenda, including regional cooperation (annex, sect. C). In response to this request, 29 inputs were received from regional and subregional entities, all of which are available on the Forum's website. The present report provides a summarized account of these inputs.

* E/CN.18/2009/1.

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The report is organized into three sections. Section I provides an overview of regional and subregional specificities and challenges, and examples of initiatives in support of the Forum. Section II summarizes regional experiences and activities, including lessons learned in implementation, with a specific focus on forests and climate change, reversing the loss of forest cover and preventing forest degradation, including in low forest cover countries, biodiversity conservation and means of implementation. Section III presents brief highlights of South-South cooperation and partnership activities and actions undertaken in preparing regional and subregional inputs to the eighth session of the Forum and draws attention to the impetus, which continues to be shared by many, to actively engage in and facilitate the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

The report highlights the important role of sustainable forest management in a socio-economic context in various fields and the varying degrees of regional progress. Disparities in means of implementation have also been noted. In particular, mobilizing resources for sustainable forest management, improving measures to strengthen forest law enforcement and good governance and building initiatives for raising awareness, all perceived as important tools requiring further attention, are also discussed.

[a] Forest-related mechanism, institution, instrument, organization or process is referred to as an entity.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixth session, in 2006, the United Nations Forum on Forests had recognized the need to strengthen interaction between the global forest policy dialogue and regional- and subregional-level organizations and processes. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/49 of 28 July 2006 (para. 3), adopted four global objectives on forests and added three new principal functions to the international arrangement on forests (para. 2 (a)-(c)). By means of this resolution, the Council strengthened the arrangement through a new and focused approach, designed to enhance the contribution of forests to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, and emphasized the importance of political commitment for the implementation of sustainable forest management. One of the arrangement's new functions, as specified by the Council, was to strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes,[1] with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21,[2] and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum (resolution 2006/49, para. 2 (c)).

2. At the Forum's seventh session, in 2007, Member States had reached agreement on the Forum's multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015 and on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (hereafter referred to as the forest instrument), reaffirming commitment to work at all levels to achieve progress towards the achievement of the global objectives by 2015. The forest instrument was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/98 of 17 December 2007, as contained in the annex thereto, following more than a decade of numerous discussions on forest policy within the United Nations.

3. Building on the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and previous decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the forest instrument sets out national policies and measures for achieving sustainable forest management. In addition, it further defines measures for international cooperation and means of implementation, six of which place considerable emphasis on regional action and cooperation. In particular, emphasis is placed on forest law enforcement, governance, capacity-building, and forestry research and development, as well as technical and scientific cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation. Therefore, successful implementation of the forest instrument is closely linked to building partnerships with all, including regional and subregional entities.

4. Given the growing regional emphasis, the Forum had decided to add a new common item on regional and subregional inputs to the agendas for its future sessions. Accordingly, regional and subregional forest-related entities were invited by the Forum to address the issues and agenda items planned for consideration at its eighth session and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum secretariat. To facilitate the submission of inputs, the Forum secretariat had prepared

[1] Commonly referred to as entities.

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

an information note, which was recognized as a helpful aid by many entities. The present report summarizes the submissions received from 29 entities. Those entities are listed in Annex I. In some cases, owing to the fact that the launching of new activities or initiatives had occurred only recently, it was difficult for entities to provide, in such a relatively short time, detailed information on experience gained on the main issues.

5. Section I of this report provides an overview of regional specificities, challenges and relevant activities in support of the Forum's work. Section II presents an update of experiences related to issues to be considered at the Forum's eighth session, while focusing on political commitments, advancements, shortcomings of implementation and cross-sectoral activities. Section III briefly highlights instances of South-South cooperation and partnership activities and the actions taken in preparing inputs to the eighth session of the Forum. Activities performed at the regional level with several members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and non-governmental organizations are also noted. While the uniqueness of forest-related entities, including their composition and mandates, is important, it will not be the main focus of the report. A thorough description of each entity is available in the official inputs to be found on the Forum's website.[3]

A. Regional and subregional specificities and challenges

6. Forests are a vital component of sustainable development and contribute significantly to global, regional and national priorities, including issues to be addressed at the Forum's eighth session. They play an essential role in ensuring environmental sustainability, human well-being, security and socio-economic development.

7. Naturally, many forestry-related priorities and challenges are shared among regional entities. However, different ecological conditions and specific socio-economic circumstances, cultural ties and political will of countries strongly influence the priorities and operating modalities of each entity, as well as its interaction with the Forum. In the last two decades, for example, the forest sectors of most African countries have been increasingly marginalized, largely owing to ongoing political and economic reforms.

8. Mandated functions, priorities and other normative characteristics of regional and subregional entities vary considerably. Regional intergovernmental processes such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development, the Central African Forests Commission, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), for example, emerged from a formal political process. On the other hand, the African Forest Forum, the Asia Forest Partnership, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and the Puembo Initiative emerged out of an open and informal approach, building on flexible programmes and partnerships with Governments, various organizations and diverse stakeholders. Long-standing technical expertise on forest issues is an important resource of regional entities. In

[3] http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff8.html#regions.

this regard, the six Regional Forestry Commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have deep-rooted knowledge of regional forest issues and a well-established approach to interacting with global processes. Those Commissions had been involved in sustainable forest management long before the United Nations Forum on Forests was established, while other entities, like the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), have recently been established.

9. All inputs submitted to the Forum for consideration at its eighth session provide constructive examples of best practices and lessons learned. The thematic issues to be considered at the eighth session, comprising loss of forest cover, forest degradation, desertification, climate change and conservation or forest biodiversity, as well as the means of implementation, were given high priority in the work of regional and subregional entities. In some cases, issues were addressed together with specific interrelated priorities. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), for instance, addressed the relationship between social migration and the pressures of desertification, forest degradation and climate change. It also mentioned the course of action taken through the implementation of its Great Green Wall programme. The impact of desertification and the rise of food insecurity on food production was covered by the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The Union's common enhancement policy for the environment is focusing on actions for addressing these and other challenges, including the decline of forest biodiversity and natural habitat destruction due to bush-meat hunting and overexploitation of wild flora and fauna. The links among severe drought, land degradation, soil erosion and poverty were presented by the Economic Cooperation Organization, which includes many low forest cover countries. In this regard, priorities to strengthen interaction with the Forum and advance implementation are closely linked with major efforts to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

10. An effective means of implementation was commonly mentioned as a necessary condition for implementing sustainable forest management, particularly at the national level. Concern was directed not only at the insufficiency of financial resources, of transfer of environmentally sound technologies and of capacity-building, but also towards weak governance and law enforcement measures, illegal forest activities, corruption, and limited forestry education and research. In this regard, the mobilization of resources at all levels, along with international cooperation and official development assistance (ODA), was considered an important means of assistance in addressing implementation-related challenges. Moreover, exploring the potential of a forest funding mechanism to assist in the implementation of the forest instrument was greatly welcomed by many developing countries and mentioned in some inputs.

11. Some entities reported on challenges in forest management, while others highlighted progress in implementation. For example, along with the joint regional strategy of the Central African Forests Commission and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, there has been an increase of certified forest areas[4] in the Congo Basin, a 2007 comprehensive report on the state of the forests of the Congo Basin, systematic capacity-building of Commission institutions and several thematic

[4] There are currently 3 million hectares within the certification process and it is planned that 10 million will have been certified by 2010.

working groups related to important regional and international forest processes, including the United Nations Forum on Forests. In addition, several countries in the subregion are engaged in Voluntary Partnership Agreement negotiations with the European Union (EU) and are focusing on activities related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).

12. Most of the responding entities have been active participants in the Forum process. In their reports, they mentioned their involvement in the Forum as well as in other multilateral forest-related forums, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[5] FAO, the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes, at the World Bank, the 2006 International Tropical Timber Agreement (TD/TIMBER.3/12), the Convention on Biological Diversity,[6] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[7] and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[8] Despite the presence of this broad participation, the mainstreaming of forest issues into national development agendas and programmes remains a major challenge. Efforts to mainstream the forest instrument into relevant regional agreements and programmes have also been weak. Efforts have been most feeble in subregions in which countries have been affected by conflict or are facing post-conflict situations. Hence, the expectation of greater effort by the Forum to take action in this regard was conveyed. The need for better coordination among forest-related national focal points and decision makers outside the forest sector was also stressed.

B. Regional and subregional initiatives in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Contributions in support of the forest instrument

13. Several activities have been carried out by regional entities in support of the forest instrument. Since 2006, input papers proposing regional elements for the forest instrument have been submitted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Group[9] and EU. In 2007, before the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Asia Forest Partnership, the African Forest Forum and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization organized preparatory meetings for their members for the purpose of addressing key aspects of the instrument and the multi-year programme of work.

14. An analysis of the relevance of the forest instrument to the work of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe was completed in 2008. Of the instrument's 60 operational paragraphs, 45 are fully relevant to the Ministerial Conference. In respect of those 45, the Ministerial Conference currently contributes to the implementation of 37 commitments through its ministerial declarations and resolutions.

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[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 993, No. 14537.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[7] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[8] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[9] In 2007, members of the African Forest Forum formed a group to facilitate negotiations in sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, called the African Group.

15. Other regional policy frameworks and strategies have dealt with substantive Forum-related matters and provisions of the forest instrument. Inputs to the Forum's eighth session, however, provide a first record of regional and subregional priorities, experiences and measures linked to the multi-year programme of work.

2. Accreditation

16. Since 2000, the Forum has granted observer status to 12 intergovernmental organizations.[10] Annex II provides a complete list of those organizations. The role of regional observer organizations in facilitating coordination and helping to develop common positions for negotiation is an important one for their members. In 2007 as a result of regional coordination, ASEAN established a Caucus on Forestry and members of the African Forest Forum formed a group to facilitate negotiations in the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, called the African Group. The ASEAN Ad Hoc Experts Working Group on International Forest Policy Processes was established to promote implementation of international forest-related commitments and agreements in the region.

3. Regional and subregional initiatives

17. Interaction between the Forum and regional entities expanded significantly during the period 2000-2007. The introduction of regional panel events at Forum sessions and workshops showcasing experiences and realities of sustainable forest management helped to build a better understanding of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. Workshops focused on positioning negotiations for Forum sessions and developing a basis for cooperative work between countries and civil society. The African preparatory meeting in Gabon, organized by the Central African Forests Commission secretariat prior to the Forum's seventh session, is a relevant example, as it brought together African delegations, various stakeholders and several international and regional entities to discuss major global policy matters included in the Forum's agenda.

18. The important role of sustainable forest management in achieving the Millennium Development Goals was also demonstrated at Forum sessions. In this context, the analytical work undertaken by the five regional commissions carries significant weight. In particular, the inputs received from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) referred to several projects and initiatives related to forests and forestry. Although the other three commissions have not provided input to the Forum's eighth session, the relevance of their work to forests and the Millennium Development Goal on ensuring environmental sustainability, as well as to other areas of regional and interregional cooperation, is worth noting.[11]

19. The Forum's regional interface generated further interest, and in 2008, the first-ever Region Led Initiative on Regional Input in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests was organized by the Governments of Australia and Switzerland and held in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008. The Initiative discussed regional

[10] The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1302, No. 21623) was granted observer status during the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process.

[11] See the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2008/15 and Add.1) of 23 May 2008.

matters in preparation for the Forum's eighth session and offered participants an opportunity to share regional priorities, challenges, integration approaches and modalities of work, including inputs to the session. The secretariats of several regional and subregional entities participated and delivered presentations at the event. The summary report is available on the Forum's website.

20. Other regional forestry-related meetings took place in 2008. Several of these meetings considered only issues to be considered at the Forum's eighth session, while others explored specific regional priorities associated with global topics. In the pan-European context, the workshop on "Forests in the changing environment", held in Koli, Finland, from 3 to 5 September 2008 (see E/CN.18/2009/14), highlighted key priorities for the Forum's eighth session. Similarly, a Pacific preparatory workshop for the Forum's eighth session is planned for March 2009 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), to prepare for the participation of Pacific island countries and territories in the eighth session.

4. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

21. Approximately 150 countries participate in one or more of nine ongoing regional processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. In the pan-European context, criteria and indicators provide guidance for developing policies and for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. The pan-European region has a shared concept of sustainable forest management principles and practices, which are comprehensive and balanced,[12] covering various aspects of sustainable forest management. The concept has been further developed through the elaboration of many political commitments, resolutions and declarations. It has been incorporated into national and local law in European countries and accepted by many European organizations as a basis for their activities. In 1998, six criteria for sustainable forest management and a set of associated indicators were politically agreed.[13] Indicators were further improved and endorsed by ministers responsible for forests in 2003.[14] These have been used for information collection, analysis and reporting at the national and regional levels, and in the report entitled *State of Europe's Forests 2007: The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe*.[15]

22. The Montréal Process (Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests) was launched in 1994. Despite having only 12 member countries, this Process spreads across four different regions,[16] which account for 80 per cent of the world's temperate and boreal forests and 50 per cent of the world's forests. In 1995, at its

[12] See resolution H1 entitled "General guidelines for the sustainable management of forests in Europe", adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 16 and 17 June 1993, Helsinki.

[13] See resolution L2 entitled "Pan-European criteria, indicators and operational-level guidelines for sustainable forest management", adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 2-4 June 1998, Lisbon.

[14] See Vienna Living Forest Summit Declaration, adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 28-30 April 2003, Vienna.

[15] Warsaw, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe Liaison Unit Warsaw, 2007.

[16] Asia-Pacific, Latin America (MERCOSUR), North America and pan-European region.

sixth meeting, members adopted the Santiago Declaration which endorsed 7 criteria and 67 associated indicators for use as guidelines for policymakers in assessing national forest trends and progress towards sustainable forest management. In 2003, the Process developed and published the first Country Forest Reports using the agreed criteria and indicators. To enhance the relevance of the indicators to sustainable forest management and improve members' ability to report, the Process initiated a review process of indicators, and completed the revision by endorsing a set of 54 indicators at its nineteenth meeting, held in Moscow from 6 to 10 November 2008.

23. Other regional entities, such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, are also developing and using criteria and indicators to assess forest trends and regional progress. For example, when adopting the Vientiane Action Programme, ASEAN member States agreed to common criteria for sustainable forest management so as to eradicate unsustainable forest practices and strengthen ASEAN cooperation and joint approaches. To evaluate country efforts towards achieving the four global objectives on forest and their linkages to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, ASEAN developed and endorsed, in 2007, the ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests; the Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting Format for sustainable forest management; and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. With these tools, ASEAN plans to regularly update the Forum on progress made in the region.

5. National forest programmes

24. The national forest programme is one of the most important outcomes of the global forest policy dialogue. As the first commonly agreed framework for sustainable forest management applicable to all countries and to all types of forests, the national forest programme provides a framework through which to put international agreements on sustainable forest management into practice. The importance of national forest programmes for a wide range of approaches, including forest policy formulation, planning and implementation at the subnational and national levels, and for cross-sectoral coordination, was a shared view expressed in most inputs. Still, not all entities have been able to use national forest programmes as a means to achieve coherent implementation of forest-related international commitments subject to the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Accordingly, improved coordination between national forest programmes, national adaptation programmes of action for climate change, national action programmes for combating desertification, and national biodiversity strategies and action plans was stressed. Integrating national forest programmes into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans was also emphasized, since the links could generate increased and sustained funding to forestry.

25. Several Regional Forestry Commissions have requested FAO to provide assistance to member countries in integrating national forest programmes into other national actions plans and development programmes. In this respect, FAO and the National Forest Programme Facility have been providing financial support to ASEAN members and several countries in Latin America and Africa. Although they

are at different stages of implementation, about two thirds of African countries have developed national forest programmes. Many African countries have also adopted new forest policies and laws, and geared efforts towards improving forest law enforcement. Through the non-legally binding instrument pilot project initiative, financial and technical support has been provided to African countries to assist them in building their capacities to reduce deforestation.

26. According to the input of ECA, several countries in Africa have developed national development plans for combating desertification. Countries have also integrated their national action programmes into national development plans, especially poverty reduction strategies, and, in some cases, have set up national desertification funds.

27. The importance of the forest sector for sustainable development of rural areas was also recognized. The EU Rural Development Regulations (2007-2013), which contain a set of forestry measures that member States can include in their rural development programmes, in line with their specific priorities and needs, constitute an appropriate example of this. Measures focus on enhancing the competitiveness of the EU forest sector and its diversification, as well as the protection and sustainable management of forests.

II. Substantive matters considered by the Forum

A. Forests and climate change

28. During the past several years, political commitments on climate change and goals to reverse the loss of forest cover from deforestation and forest degradation have greatly increased. The European Commission, for example, adopted several communications in 2007, on renewable energy, limiting global climate change and building a global alliance with developing countries. Through the Commission's Renewable Energy Road Map, EU recommends the establishment of a mandatory target of 20 per cent for renewable energy consumption in EU by 2020. In the ASEAN context, its 20 November 2007 Declaration on Environmental Sustainability emphasizes activities to be undertaken with the international community with a view to better understanding and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. In the Declaration, Heads of State and Government of ASEAN member countries agreed to work collectively towards increasing the cumulative forest cover of ASEAN by at least 10 million hectares by 2020, while in the Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment (21 November 2007), members of ASEAN and six other countries[17] committed to working collectively to increase the cumulative forest cover in the East Asia region by at least 15 million hectares by 2020. Despite their different targets, both political declarations expressed support for the achievement of the global objectives on forests.

29. On the subregional scale, the Land Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community organized the Third Regional Meeting of Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (3-5 September 2008) and the Second Regional Conference of Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (8 and 9 September 2008), out of which arose

[17] Japan, Republic of Korea, China, India, Australia and New Zealand.

an endorsement of climate change-related activities within the Division, as reflected in its strategic plan 2009-2012. SADC members have initiated policy and legislative reviews and national action plans and programmes to address challenges related to, among others, climate change, the loss of forest cover and land degradation, loss of biodiversity and the means of implementation of sustainable forest management. Furthermore, the subregion has developed the SADC Forestry Protocol (2002), which is the overarching policy framework for a collaboration among member States on forest development which also covers substantive matters addressed by the United Nations Forum on Forests. While stimulating regional coordination and implementation on forest matters, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development has promoted greater integration among its member States. The revised strategic programme on forests for the period 2008-2012, for example, provides a significant framework through which member countries can plan and carry out their regional priority activities. In the context of climate change, subregional plans are under way to harmonize strategies designed to develop and implement readiness plans in respect of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and to create a monitoring, evaluation and regional certification mechanism.

30. Through its ministerial declarations and resolutions, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe has continued to address urgent issues impacting forest conditions in Europe. Among the key commitments of the Fifth Ministerial Conference (Warsaw Conference), held in Warsaw from 5 to 7 November 2007, those related to climate change, water and forest fires stood out prominently. The forest instrument, the global objectives and the importance of regional cooperation were also reflected in the Warsaw Declaration, which was signed at the Conference. The need for greater complementarities among the Rio Conventions was also underlined. At the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the "Environment for Europe" process (Belgrade Conference), held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007, ministers for the environment recognized the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. The impacts on species, habitats, migratory patterns of species, and landscape were noted and the ministers committed to continue supporting the Pan-European Ecological Network.

31. Many regional priorities of sustainable forest management and climate change are aimed at providing strategic support to countries in the context of the development of a post-2012 climate regime. A Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe open-ended ad hoc working group on sustainability criteria for forest biomass production, including bioenergy, and guidelines for afforestation and reforestation, for example, constitute means of providing such support in the pan-European region. In other regions, capacity-building has been the key focus with regard to strengthening the position of countries so that they can participate more effectively in international climate negotiations. In this context, ECA has been working on establishing an African Climate Policy Centre to enhance countries' capacity to coordinate adaptation and mitigation investments.

32. Research has also contributed to addressing this topic. Research activities in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe have been carried out mostly by the European Forest Institute. Its contributions include studies assessing the impacts of climate change on European forests and examining silvicultural response options. Recent studies focus on adaptation options and measures. ECE and FAO have also been addressing related issues encompassing the

estimation of supply and consumption of wood energy, wood resources balances and the role of harvested wood products in climate change policy, and plan to work further, with partners, to provide consistent data and policy messages on climate change. Not all regions, however, share this same research experience. Many inputs hint at a variability in awareness with respect to climate change-related issues. Most climate change-related topics are new to some countries, mainly in the Pacific region and within the African continent; support is therefore required for research activities.

33. Many European countries have carbon-related policies for the forest sector. According to *State of Europe's Forests 2007*, such policies are mostly focused on the promotion of bioenergy and less on carbon sequestration or the adaptation of forests to climate change. Twenty-one European countries have chosen to account for forest management under article 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[18] Not all regions, however, can participate easily in forest projects under the Kyoto Protocol. In the case of the Pacific islands, the opportunities provided through the international trade in carbon credits or carbon offsets are poorly known and understood. Lack of information has led to skepticism among some forestry stakeholders regarding the benefits of different mechanisms. In response, clean development mechanism workshops have been organized to enhance the understanding of forestry agencies and institutions. Although Central American countries are aware of the opportunities related to conservation and forest management, accessibility has been limited for them. Apparently, there is not one forest-related project in the subregion that was implemented under the Kyoto Protocol scheme, despite the fact that some projects had been selected.[19]

34. Views on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and sustainable forest management differ among regions. In 2008, the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance process tasked the ASEAN Experts Group on International Forest Policy Processes with developing REDD-related project proposals and to prepare an ASEAN input, including a sustainable forest management option for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-related discussions. The Asia Forest Partnership is also addressing the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation mainly through governance and efforts to combat illegal logging. Despite the attention given to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the concept is laden with ambiguity. In this regard, some regional entities suggest developing a common understanding on issues related to the implementation of projects for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Examining definitions and simplifying methodologies for estimating forest carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions, especially from forest degradation, have been mentioned as a means of achieving this common understanding. Mention has also been made of the need to address the issues of additionality, leakage, permanency, baseline and the governance structure of REDD so as to guarantee a clear and secure tenure arrangement. On the other hand, incentives to limit deforestation through schemes such as REDD have been deemed constructive by some regional entities. Secured financial resources would be expected to support endogenous capacity-building and

[18] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[19] Examples of such projects, in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, have been provided by the Central America Commission on Environment.

institutional strengthening when REDD pilot projects or demonstration activities were being undertaken. Expectations for REDD are also high in respect of the inclusion of conservation and reforestation activities, which are beneficial for productive forests as well as for the financing of environmental services in protected areas.

35. According to the inputs, forests in all regions have suffered, to different extents, from severe storm damages, natural disasters and adverse climatic events. In addition, fires continue to be a major threat to forests. In Europe, policy instruments to address the issue of protection of forests from atmospheric pollution and fire had been developed starting in the 1990s. In 2003, the Forest Focus scheme for monitoring European forest ecosystems replaced such instruments. Other regions, however, still need to establish and/or strengthen networks for the management of transborder fires and other disaster prevention. CARICOM has been focusing on training and coordinated regional disaster response teams. Many regional entities expressed concern regarding future unknown scenarios, including the links among climate change, natural disasters, forest fires, pests and diseases, as well as impacts on forest genetic resources.

36. Through applied research and testing mechanisms, impacts on forests from climate change have been anticipated and better understood. One such mechanism is the International Model Forest Network, which has provided a series of transnational landscape-level sites dedicated to knowledge-generation and -sharing. The Circumboreal Initiative is a unique example. It provides collaborative opportunities for countries in the boreal biome to assist forest-dependent communities in assessing their climate change vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity, as well as to improve the sustainability of forest land-use and its biodiversity. Another such mechanism is the Carbon Budget Model[20] which predicts the amount of carbon stored in managed forests. Despite these and other technological advances, many regions are limited in their access to such research tools owing to high costs and training requirements. Moreover, the types of technology required for assessing and quantifying changes in carbon stock of forest stands managed under different management options, and for various forest types in different regions, still need to be identified and tested.

B. Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries

37. Across regions, there are shared concerns about continued deforestation and forest degradation. Adverse impacts on economies, on the environment, including biological diversity, and on the livelihoods of at least 1 billion people and their cultural heritage are pressing challenges resulting from persisting deforestation and unsustainable practices. Impacts of deforestation and forest degradation, climate change and the loss of biodiversity will have major — and, in some cases, devastating — social and economic consequences, especially for low forest cover countries and small island developing States.

[20] A joint project of the Canadian Model Forest Network and Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service.

38. Oftentimes, the causes of deforestation lie outside the forest sector and are associated with agricultural policies and practices that promote land-use change. Many of the rural poor rely on agriculture, livestock husbandry and harvesting of non-wood forestry products. In Africa, for instance, limited progress on irrigated agriculture, coupled with insufficient or lack of water, dictates the practice of extensive agriculture, leading to more deforestation and forest degradation. Overreliance on outdated and polluting technologies in factories, as well as in the transport and other sectors, also affects the forest sector. In the context of the Central America Commission on Environment, conservation-related policies and practices were recognized as factors promoting land-use change and contributing to greater poverty conditions, since such policies in some Central American countries prohibited the use of forests, in or outside protected areas, without providing alternatives.

39. Diverse views have been generated within and among regions on the demand for biofuels. The major concerns relate, for the most part, to how biofuels impact the livelihoods of local and indigenous communities and affect deforestation in natural forest areas.

40. Population growth and dependence of local people on forest resources have also caused uncontrolled deforestation and land degradation in several regions. Based on SADC input, the lack of clearly established landownership exposes forest resources to overexploitation and constrains investments. The enhancement of agricultural programmes set up to address food security has also led to greater clearing of forested land. Associated environmental impacts, such as lack of water, create additional challenges for reforestation. In light of this, SADC members are adapting and revising their forest policies, national programmes and strategies so as to better implement sustainable forest management. In this context, policies are also promoting participatory approaches, cost-benefit sharing mechanisms and alternative sources of energy.

41. Efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation have focused on preventing land degradation, rehabilitating degraded forest areas, preventing forest fires, combating illegal logging and establishing forest plantations. The 2002 Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, the 2004 Strategic Alliance for Combating Illegal Logging and the 2007 Statement on Strengthening Forest Law Enforcement and Governance are examples of ASEAN achievements in this regard. The active joint participation of ASEAN in other regional and multilateral processes such as the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance initiative has also been instrumental in addressing these challenges. Other initiatives focusing on combating land degradation are the Green Wall for the Sahara programme, the decision on whose implementation was adopted at the Summit of African Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, the Plan of Action for Cooperation among the ECO Member States on Environment, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development/Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and Environment Initiative. The African Union, ECA and the African Development Bank are also implementing a Land Policy Initiative to address the inequitable distribution of land, mismanagement of land resources and inconsistent legislation. The Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa are planned for adoption at the next Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government.

42. EU measures enacted to contribute to the prevention, mitigation and control of forest dieback so as to improve forest stability and forest restoration have been implemented in Europe. Of these, the Regulation on rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is highly regarded. Reforestation projects carried out in Central America have yielded constructive results at the national level. In the near future, the subregion intends to promote a greater interchange of experiences within all Latin America. Nicaragua has already initiated an information exchange project with Chile that focuses on forest incentives and extensions. Through the Model Forests initiative, ecologically restorative projects in degraded forest areas to improve ecological processes have been implemented.

C. Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas

43. The conservation of forest biodiversity was signalled as constituting an essential element of sustainable forest management. Almost all inputs highlighted the Convention on Biological Diversity and efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. In this context, in 2006, the European Commission produced a Communication setting out a detailed EU Biodiversity Action Plan including measures to fulfil the target. In 2003, through the Environment for Europe process, European ministers for the environment had endorsed the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity. Within the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe context, countries committed to coordinating the implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity[21] and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. The Framework for Cooperation between the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and Environment for Europe/Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and the approach of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to national forest programmes and the ecosystem approach, have been used to coordinate implementation. A MCPFE workshop on sustainable forest management to address aspects of the pan-European 2010 target will be organized in 2010.

44. A broad range of biodiversity-related international agreements are being implemented by EU and its members. Through the Natura 2000 scheme, EU intends to protect Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. EU also plays an active role within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species by regulating the trade in timber species most at risk. The ASEAN Vientiane Action Programme is also promoting cooperation on biodiversity-related measures within multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).[22] Besides having incorporated the Convention on Biological Diversity target, the Programme promotes coordinated management of ASEAN Heritage Parks. These Parks are of high conservation value, having preserved 27 sites to date, and perform an important role in meeting the Millennium

[21] Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its sixth meeting (see UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20, annex I, decision VI/22, annex).

[22] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 996, No. 14583.

Development Goal of reducing biodiversity loss. The Programme of Work on Protected Areas, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its seventh meeting,[23] has also been adopted by ASEAN. As regards the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Treaty of Izmir has set three main objectives which relate to energy resources, environmental protection and cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and other regional and international organizations, as well as financial institutions. Pursuant to the third Ministerial Meeting on Environment, a meeting on biodiversity was held in 2007 at which the Economic Cooperation Organization reached consensus on its Work Plan on Biodiversity (2007-2015), for which Kazakhstan serves as coordinating country. A Task Force Meeting on Ecotourism was also convened in 2007.

45. Commitments to designate transboundary protected areas, production forests and sustainable land-use areas have been on the rise. In 2007, three ASEAN member States (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia) signed the Heart of Borneo Declaration. Measures have been taken to minimize impacts of transboundary movement of living modified organisms, in accordance with ASEAN Guidelines on Risk Assessment of Agriculture-related Genetically Modified Organisms. Trans-frontier conservation areas are also being established by SADC member States to empower communities to conserve and sustainably use their natural resources. Significant conservation areas, such as national parks, biosphere reserves, World Heritage Forests, Ramsar sites and recreational parks, are also contained within or around model forests.

46. Actions taken to facilitate access to, and fair and equitable sharing of, benefits arising from biological and genetic resources were noted. A draft ASEAN Framework Agreement on Access to, and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from, the Utilization of Biological and Genetic Resources is almost complete. While progress has been made in some regions, other regions and subregions still face poor benefit-sharing mechanisms, owing to a lack of the means to provide people in and around forests with adequate incentives for forest protection. In Central America, the proper incorporation of indigenous communities in protected-area management and their adequate participation in conservation projects and in the benefits arising from community forestry remain a major challenge. Regional and subregional inputs also emphasized the minor value attached to environmental products and services. Agricultural expansion, unsustainable forest management and bioenergy production have been viewed as significant threats to biodiversity conservation.

47. Despite large forest areas under formal protection, protected areas in many regions have been progressively linked with weak law enforcement and governance, limited operational measures, poor infrastructure and weak economic incentives for forest biodiversity conservation. About 70 per cent of protected areas in Central America do not have sufficient human and financial resources to effectively achieve their protective functions.[24]

48. Owing to continued forest loss, forest policies, legislation and plans in the Pacific region have undergone a significant shift, from an approach based on forest products and production to one applying more environmentally based concepts.

[23] See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/28, annex.

[24] Input of Central America Commission on Environment, 2008.

Provisions in many Pacific countries have encouraged national forest management plans to incorporate ecological and cultural management needs so as to address biodiversity conservation. In addition, better coordination and collaboration between sectors and more involvement in economic, social and environmental affairs are encouraged for the forest sector.

49. Various forest biodiversity projects at the regional level are supported by bilateral and multilateral cooperation organizations, including many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Many projects are directed at institutional strengthening, development of conservation policies and management of protected areas. Monitoring of the trends in forest biodiversity and their interaction with sustainable forest management policies was recommended.

D. Means of implementation of sustainable forest management

50. As a contribution to the consideration of item 6 of the provisional agenda for the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, some regional entities participated in the meeting of the Forum's Open-ended Ad Hoc Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework, held in Vienna from 10 to 14 November 2008, providing views on a potential forest financial arrangement. Views on the means of implementation were also included in most inputs to the Forum's eighth session. In this regard, the weak reflection of forestry activities in national plans and accounts, the limited and difficult access to funding dedicated to Sustainable Forest Management within official development mechanisms, and the weak intraregional trade in forest products and services, as well as the lack of economic incentives for Sustainable Forest Management, were considered the most pressing issues. Many regional entities also recognized the significance of subregional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes, including trade and opportunities for Sustainable Forest Management through payment-for-forest ecosystem services schemes. The need to develop and carry out such schemes while bearing in mind local community livelihood priorities and benefits was considered important.

51. The issue of cutbacks in ODA and national government funding to the forest sector and their allocation to other sectors was a major concern. According to SADC, limited valuation of forest products and limited understanding of the contribution of forests to other sectors, as well as to gross domestic product (GDP), have led to an underestimation of the forest sector in national budgets. In many regions, the lack of financial resources allocated to the forest sector has resulted in a high dependency on conditional donor funding.[25]

52. In EU, the LIFE-Nature Programme contributes funds for restoration of forest areas designated as special conservation areas and the LIFE Environment Programme contributes funds for Sustainable Forest Management approaches.[26] While the management of forests in the agricultural context is financed through the EU rural development policy, the research and monitoring topics are under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development

[25] Input of the Southern African Development Community, 2008.

[26] Input of EU, 2008.

(2007-2013). The importance of ensuring sustainably managing forest resources so as to contribute to poverty eradication was also noted. To this end, the Thematic Programme on Environment and Natural Resources supports forest activities that influence national, regional and international policy developments and the implementation of EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) voluntary partnership agreements. Over 100 million euros of the Thematic Programme is expected to cover forest- and FLEGT-related projects for 2007-2010. However, major financial contributions from developed countries are still needed to support incentive schemes that tackle deforestation.[27]

53. Inputs also revealed a growing tendency to implement national initiatives with regional resources, jointly with international agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors, so as to promote forest management, rural development and economic growth. The multi-partnership mechanism TerrAfrica, with its support to countries in sub-Saharan Africa for mobilizing resources and scaling up coordinated investments in sustainable land management practices, constitutes a relevant example. Supporting the TerrAfrica principles, the Global Environment Facility in 2007 approved US$ 150 million for the Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management. In the Pacific region, however, Sustainable Forest Management faces grave challenges in terms of achievement of sustained economic growth. Evidence from the 2007 assessment of progress on the implementation of codes of logging practice in several Pacific island countries and territories showed little positive change since the first assessment in 1999. While addressing these challenges, the secretariat of the Pacific Community has been providing members with support through technical assistance and training programmes at the subregional level and small grants to fund national and community initiatives.

54. Despite existing legislative frameworks, many regional inputs expressed concern regarding forest law enforcement. Lack of judicial support, limited capacities to implement forest law enforcement and governance initiatives, poor transparency and accountability, weak legislation and high costs in terms of infrastructure and human resources were mentioned as factors associated with deficient law enforcement. In some countries, the factor of overlapping jurisdictions between the central government, the district council (or local government) and traditional authorities was noted as being contributory to conflict in the management of forest resources. Delegating law enforcement authority to entities lacking the capacity to utilize it effectively was also a cause for concern.

55. The EU Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade Action Plan, on the other hand, provided a positive scenario in terms of governance reforms, capacity-building, public procurement policies and private sector involvement. Moreover, in 2008, the first forest law enforcement and governance and trade voluntary partnership agreement was concluded with Ghana. Expressions of interest in FLEGT issues have come from several other African and East Asian countries.

56. New and emerging requirements for forests and forestry have called for improved technological skills and capacities. The European Forest Institute Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research capacity-building project, currently implemented in the western Balkan region, contributes to long-term governance and forest policy in countries with economies in transition. While there has been some

[27] Input of EU, 2008.

regional progress in technology transfer, with improved remote sensing, geographic information systems in forest management and monitoring, and the adoption of clean technologies, the high costs, limited access to information and lack of skills generally limit access to, and use of, technology in many other regions.

57. Cross-border law enforcement and efforts to curb illegal harvesting and trade in forest products were also mentioned. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe highlighted relevant studies addressing environmental and socio-economic impacts of illegal forest-related activities within their purview. Establishing links to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species was also noted. In this regard, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network and Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora (2005-2010) provide interesting examples. Furthermore, a regional assessment on the development and implementation of national codes of practice for forest harvesting, conducted by partners in the Asia-Pacific region, served to strengthen the East Asia for law enforcement and governance process. Relevant in this regard are the activities of the International Tropical Timber Organization-Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species programme on timber species, which ensures that international trade in Convention-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation.

58. Despite the fact that the political will to pursue sustainable forest management does exist, there are major differences among regions and subregions. In Africa, inadequate gender mainstreaming in forestry and the shortage of trained forestry staff exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic are additional major challenges. Many entities expressed concern regarding the gap between forest policies and plans and their actual implementation. In this regard, better focus of available financial resources on integrated sustainable forest management implementation was encouraged.

III. Regional cooperation and partnerships

59. There is great potential for regional cooperation in helping to improve forest policy coordination, exchange information and develop joint approaches. Policy innovations provided by several partnerships, initiatives and networks have also helped to bring together and engage actors in an open and flexible manner. The cooperation between the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the Environment for Europe/UNEP/Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, through the Work Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Biodiversity in Forest Ecosystems and their Framework of Cooperation, was noted as a positive example.

60. Further work needs, however, to focus on clarifying key elements and different values, as well as the specific contributions of Sustainable Forest Management in relation to challenges in other sectors and their demands related to forests. Attention was also drawn to improving awareness-raising and access to information on the links between climate change and forest issues, particularly within the Pacific countries and the African region.

61. The fact that a variety of international, regional and subregional entities, including major stakeholder groups, were working on similar issues at the regional

level, under diverse arrangements, was another important point raised in the context of communication and harmonization efforts. As each entity has its own mandate, as well as specific objectives, priorities and programmes, coordination is not always easily achieved. The appointment of regional focal points to facilitate coordination of inputs and to maintain regular communication with the Forum secretariat was considered constructive in this regard.

62. Information-sharing, education and awareness-building initiatives have, in many cases, helped to increase the profile of forests outside the forest sector. In this vein, the Regional Forestry Commissions introduced innovative regional approaches at their 2008 sessions. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission, for example, held a first-ever joint session and the Asia-Pacific Forestry and the European Commission organized, in collaboration with partners, Asia-Pacific Forestry Week and European Forest Week, respectively. The Latin America and Caribbean Forestry Commission also addressed regional cooperation through subregional actions, including activities supported by the Puembo Initiative. Additional approaches were applied through the dynamic working groups of the North American Forestry Commission as well as the joint work undertaken by the European Forestry Commission and the ECE Timber Committee and their teams of specialists.

63. Multi-stakeholder dialogues and consultative processes, in many regional and subregional entities, have helped to ensure transparency and credibility. Working links have been established with non-governmental organizations, including the Nature Conservancy, TRAFFIC International, the World Resources Institute and WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature, among others, to support the implementation of thematic activities. A noteworthy instrument connected to the work of EU is the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matter (Aarhus Convention),[28] which ensures a participatory process in policymaking. Facilitating interaction between policymaking processes and the science community was also encouraged. In addition, joint activities and memorandums of understanding with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and involvement with particular Governments on specific topics were highlighted.

64. Several entities organized meetings to prepare inputs to the session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, which involved government representatives, international and regional organizations and major groups. A relevant example is the SADC Stakeholder Forestry Forum meeting. The ASEAN secretariat compiled information and presented it to the Senior Officials on Forestry before submitting it to the Forum secretariat. ECA drew from consensus review reports and regional statements issued for the fourteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The review reports were enriched with inputs from the previous regional implementation meetings. Direct consultations were not undertaken in the cases, inter alia, of the Asia Forest Partnership, the Asia Forest Forum, the Caribbean Community, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Central America Commission on Environment and the West African Economic and Monetary Union; instead, past reports and outcome documents were used in the preparation of inputs to the Forum's eighth session.

[28] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2161, No. 37770.

65. Recommendations were put forward to the Forum secretariat, including suggestions on how to strengthen closer cooperation with regional entities through harmonized reporting formats, and better use of the Forum website in light of regional activities, as well as resource mobilization for more effective regional reporting to the Forum.

Annex I

Regional and subregional entities providing inputs to the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

African Forest Forum

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization

African Forestry and Wildlife Commission

Asia Forest Partnership

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Caribbean Community

Central African Forests Commission

Central American Commission for Environment and Development

Community of Sahel-Saharan States

Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Europe/Timber Committee

Economic Cooperation Organization

European Forest Institute

European Forestry Commission

European Union

International Model Forest Network

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

Montréal Process

Near East Forestry Commission

North American Forestry Commission

Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

Puembo Initiative

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Southern African Development Community

West African Economic and Monetary Union

Annex II

United Nations Forum on Forests-accredited entities

2001: Center for International Forestry Research; International Tropical Timber Organization; Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

2003: International Centre for Research in Agroforestry; secretariat of the Tehran Process for Low Forest Cover Countries; International Network for Bamboo and Rattan

2004: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

2005: Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization; Montréal Process

2006: Asia Forest Partnership; Central African Forests Commission; secretariat of the Pacific Community

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New York, 20 April-1 May 2009
Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Forests in a changing environment

Forests and climate change

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

Climate change poses a very serious threat to forests throughout the world and to millions of people who depend on forests to various degrees for their livelihoods, shelter, food and water. The present report examines the impact of climate change on forests and sustainable forest management, addresses the important roles that forests can play in mitigating and adaptation to climate change and identifies possible actions on the part of the United Nations Forum on Forests to that end.

Globally, forest ecosystems in 2005 contained 638 billion tons of carbon, half of it (321 billion tons) in forest biomass and dead wood. The amount of carbon in forests is greater than the amount of carbon currently in the atmosphere. Deforestation and forest degradation are the primary drivers of carbon emissions from forests, accounting for 17.4 per cent of total human-generated carbon dioxide emissions in 2004. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and ensuring the sustainable management and conservation of forests can contribute significantly to mitigating climate change.

Any decision by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on issues regarding reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation may open up new prospects for a funding source for the sustainable management and conservation of forests in the post-2012 Kyoto Protocol commitment period.

* E/CN.18/2009/1.

** The issuance of the present report was delayed owing to the need for extended consultations.

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Consideration should be given to closer cooperation between the Forum on Forests and the secretariats of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as well as among member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, on the role of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

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I. Introduction

1. The non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, hereinafter referred to as the forest instrument, agreed upon by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its seventh session, was adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2007 (see resolution 62/98, annex). In the preambular part of the forest instrument, Member States recognized the impact of climate change on forests and sustainable forest management, as well as the important contributions that forests can make to addressing climate change. At its seventh session, the Forum also adopted the multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015, which calls for the eighth session, to be held in 2009, to address the issue of forests in a changing environment, including the themes "forests and climate change", "reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries" and "forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas". The present report addresses the first of those interconnected themes, the other two being the focus of separate reports of the Secretary-General. This issue is also of great importance to the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which together have prepared a paper for the session entitled "Strategic framework for forests and climate change: a proposal by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for a coordinated forest-sector response to climate change".

2. Although the issue of forests and climate change was discussed by the Forum's predecessors, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), no proposals for action were agreed upon regarding the issue.[1] With the adoption of the programme of work for the period 2007-2015, the Forum has the opportunity to effectively engage in addressing and supporting the global climate change agenda as it pertains to forests.

3. The present report draws on various sources, including the work of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and general literature. Contributions from member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, particularly the strategic framework, were important in its elaboration. Proposals and recommendations of the Secretary-General are presented in his report on recommendations for addressing key challenges of forests in a changing environment (E/CN.18/2009/8).

II. Forests as a microcosm of sustainable development

4. In addressing the issue of forests and climate change, care must be taken to consider the full scope of forests in sustainable development. Forests provide much more than the carbon sequestration valued in the context of climate change, and it would be a mistake to let that one issue dominate the global forest agenda. If a single good or service among the many covered by sustainable forest management is the subject of a disproportionate focus, including significant financing, there is a

[1] United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, Subject index and thematic clustering of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, United Nations Forum on Forests resolutions and decisions and relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions, 2007 (*unpublished*).

risk that sustainable forest management could be distorted to the detriment of other goods and services.

5. In the forest instrument, Member States recognized that forests and trees outside forests provide multiple economic, social and environmental benefits and that sustainable forest management contributes significantly to sustainable development and poverty eradication. As is set out, in its statement of purpose, the forest instrument is aimed at enhancing the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and environmental sustainability.

6. Forests contribute to the livelihoods of at least 1.6 billion people. Some 60 million people, mainly indigenous communities, live within forests, and another 350 million people are highly dependent on forests. Forest industries, both formal and informal, employ 50 million people. It is estimated that the annual value of international trade in forest products is approximately $270 billion, with 20 per cent corresponding to developing countries. The forest sector continues to grow in economic importance.[2]

7. Forests are critically important for maintaining vital ecosystem functions and the services required for sustainable development, such as the conservation of biodiversity, soil conservation, carbon sequestration, water quality and supply, flood control and climate regulation. It is estimated that at least 80 per cent of the Earth's remaining terrestrial biodiversity is found in forests, which are also a major carbon sink for regulating the global climate (see sect. III below).

8. Given the importance of forests to sustainable development, societal well-being and the provision of key environmental services, climate change poses a very serious threat not only to forests and forest ecosystems but also to millions of people who depend on forests to various degrees for their livelihoods, shelter, food and water.

III. Forests in the climate change equation

9. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, principally carbon dioxide, are the main causes of climate change, including global warming. Over the past century, there has been an average temperature increase of 0.74°C, and 11 of the 12 years from 1995 to 2006 rank among the 12 warmest years since 1850. Projected increases in the frequency and intensity of storms, floods, heat waves and drought will affect the lives of billions of people worldwide. It has been projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that, if the current trend continues unabated, global temperature will have increased by 1.8 to 4°C by the end of this century, affecting most severely the planet's poorest and most vulnerable and disadvantaged people.[3]

10. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the largest increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the period from 1970 to 2004 resulted from

[2] World Bank, *Forests Sourcebook* (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2006).

[3] United Nations Environment Programme, *Global Environment Outlook: Environment for Development (GEO-4), Summary for Decision Makers* (Valletta, 2007), p. 8.

the energy supply, transport and industry sectors, with lower increases for residential and commercial buildings and the forest and agriculture sectors. In 2004, it was estimated that energy supply accounted for 25.9 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions; industry, for 19.4 per cent; and forests, for 17.4 per cent, owing primarily to deforestation and forest degradation.[4]

11. The parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in decision 5/CP.13, welcomed the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, recognizing it as the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment on climate change to date. The fourth assessment report addresses options for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change, and concludes that unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt. For the lowest mitigation scenario category assessed, emissions would need to peak by 2015, and for the highest, by 2090.[5]

A. Impact of climate change on forests

12. The impact of climate change on forests can be negative or positive, depending on their geographic location. The impact in drylands or lands with lower precipitation rates, particularly in Africa and Asia, of increased temperatures and a drop in rainfall will have far-reaching consequences for forests and the forest-dependent poor, who are already highly vulnerable. In other regions, such as eastern Central America, there have been increases in precipitation, which can be beneficial, although higher temperatures and drought during El Niño episodes can still adversely affect forest ecology.

13. Climate change is having a significant effect on forests through changes in their physiology, structure, species composition and health, largely resulting from changes in temperature and rainfall. Also at risk are the important environmental services that they provide. Of particular concern are the effects that increased temperatures and drought are having on forest health and productivity: more frequent outbreaks of pest infestations, more forest fires and increasing alterations in the populations of plant and animal species.

14. In its fourth assessment report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projected that by 2050 increases in temperature and associated decreases in soil water would lead to the gradual replacement of tropical forests by savannahs in eastern Amazonia. Many tropical forests in Latin America will experience a loss in biodiversity.[6] It is projected that by 2030, productivity from forests will have declined over much of southern and eastern Australia and parts of eastern New Zealand as a result of drought and fire.[7]

15. One of the most publicized examples of the effects of climate change is the catastrophic infestation, owing to increased temperatures, of trees in Canada by the mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*), which has devastated large

[4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report*, available at http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/ar4-syr.htm.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

expanses of forests there. In the period from 1997 to 2007, an estimated 13 million hectares, or 130,000 km^2, were destroyed by that pest in western Canada. This destruction is one order of magnitude greater than that caused by any previous outbreak.[8]

16. Global warming due to climate change can also have some positive effects on forest ecosystems, for example by providing longer growing seasons, especially in temperate and boreal regions, leading to faster growth. However, unpredictable changes in composition of flora and fauna and other environmental factors should not be underestimated.

B. Impact of deforestation and forest degradation on climate

17. Carbon, which is stored in large amounts in trees, understory vegetation and forest soils, is the key component of the main greenhouse gas contributing to global warming. Globally, forest ecosystems contained 638 billion tons of carbon in 2005, half of it (321 billion tons) in forest biomass and dead wood. The amount of carbon in forests is greater than the amount of carbon currently in the atmosphere.[9]

18. Deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries are among the primary sources of carbon emissions from forests, as carbon stored in trees and soil is quickly released into the atmosphere by burning forests. In 2004, the forest sector accounted for release of approximately 8.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide, mostly from deforestation, which is equivalent to 17.4 per cent of total human-generated carbon dioxide emissions.[4]

19. In contributing to forest degradation and destruction, climate change is also exacerbating the release of carbon dioxide and further compounding global warming. For example, it is estimated that the cumulative impact of the destruction of forests in western Canada by the mountain pine beetle in the period from 2000 to 2020 as a result of warmer temperatures will be 270 million tons of carbon, an amount equivalent to the reduction in gas emissions by 2012 to which Canada committed itself under the Kyoto Protocol.[10]

IV. Role of forests in responding to climate change

20. Discussion of the role of forests in addressing climate change has been a long and ongoing process. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was adopted in 1992, recognizes the importance of forests as a sink for greenhouse gases. In article 4, paragraph 1 (d) of the Convention, parties commit themselves to promoting sustainable management, and promoting and cooperating in the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems.

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[8] Brian Hoyle (2008), "Plight of the pines", *Nature Reports Climate Change*, available at http://www.nature.com/climate/2008/0805/full/climate.2008.35.html.

[9] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005*, Forestry Paper 147 (FAO, Rome, 2005), pp. 34 and 35.

[10] W. A. Kurtz and others, "Mountain pine beetle and forest carbon feedback to climate change", *Nature* (24 April 2008), pp. 987-990.

21. Several articles of the Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997, including, in particular, article 3, paragraph 3, make provision for the inclusion of land use, land-use change and forestry activities by parties as part of their efforts to implement the Protocol and contribute to the mitigation of climate change. Article 12 of the Protocol defines the clean development mechanism that allows emission-reduction projects in developing countries to earn certified emission reduction credits. Such credits can be traded, sold and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission-reduction targets. It should be noted, however, that, under the clean development mechanism, with regard to forestry, only afforestation and reforestation activities are considered eligible.[11]

22. Despite the provision for the inclusion of afforestation and reforestation projects in the clean development mechanism, owing to various methodological and policy constraints, so far only a negligible number of such projects on forests have been registered.

23. More recently, forests have been receiving greater attention in climate change deliberations, not only because of their role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, but also because of growing concerns about carbon emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, where emissions are considerable and increasing. Deforestation and forest degradation are receiving particular attention owing to their significant contribution to global carbon emissions. Deforestation is causing 35 per cent of emissions in developing countries, and in the least developed countries the figure is as high as 65 per cent.[12]

24. The inclusion of the issue of deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries in the context of combating global warming is gaining ground in international negotiations and public discussions. The discussions include various options for public payments and market-based mechanisms to avoid deforestation and degradation.

25. The Bali Action Plan, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2007 (decision 1/CP.13), is a two-year process aimed at finalizing a post-2012 regime for the Kyoto Protocol at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in December 2009. The Bali Action Plan established the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention to conduct the long-term cooperative action process, which should be complete by the end of 2009. Issues to be considered include a shared vision for long-term cooperative action, mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer, as well as finance. In particular, the Bali Action Plan will address mitigation action by considering policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

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[11] See decision 17/CP.7 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and decisions 3/CMP.1, 5/CMP.1, 6/CMP.1 and 16/CMP.1 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

[12] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *State of the World's Forests 2007* (FAO, Rome, 2007), p. 75.

26. To this end, the forest instrument can provide a framework for closer cooperation and collaboration between the Forum on Forest and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Global objectives on forests 1 and 3 of the forest instrument aim, respectively, to reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation, and to increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, and increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests. Moreover, the IPF and IFF proposals for action and resolutions of the Forum provide a policy body of work which addresses the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation at the national and international levels that can contribute significantly to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and that can enhance forest carbon stocks through sustainable forest management.

V. Importance of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation

27. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation was first addressed as an agenda item at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Montreal in 2005. Two years later, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Bali Action Plan. In anticipation of an agreement at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, a number of activities supported by substantial financial resources have been initiated in pursuit of the objectives relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation since the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

28. In its decision 2/CP.13, entitled "Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action", the Conference of the Parties acknowledged that deforestation and forest degradation result in global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and that such emissions need to be urgently addressed. It also noted that the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries requires stable and predictable resources. It also requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice of the Framework Convention on Climate Change to work on methodological issues — including estimating and monitoring changes in forest cover and associated carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions — related to a range of policy approaches and incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. At the twenty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, held during the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, the Subsidiary Body adopted a number of significant conclusions in this regard.[13] The Subsidiary Body, inter alia,

(a) Requested its Chair to organize an expert meeting to focus on methodological issues relating to reference emission levels for deforestation and forest degradation; the relationship among the reference emission levels and

[13] See FCCC/SBSTA/2008/L.23. In due course, the relevant meeting reports will be available at the website of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

relevant reference levels; and the role and contribution of conservation, sustainable management of forests, changes in forest cover and associated carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks to enhance action on mitigation of climate change and to the consideration of reference levels;

(b) Recommended methodological guidance noting the importance of, inter alia, promoting the readiness of developing countries, and further mobilization of resources, in relation to decision 2/CP.13, and recognizing the need to promote the full and effective participation of indigenous people and local communities, taking into account national circumstances and noting relevant international agreements;

(c) Recommended taking into account methodological guidance, including, inter alia, the use of the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Inventories*, and encouraging the use of the *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry*, as appropriate;

(d) Requested the secretariat to prepare a technical paper on the cost of implementing methodologies and monitoring systems;

(e) Invited parties and accredited observers to submit, if appropriate, their views on issues relating to indigenous people and local communities for the development and application of methodologies;

(f) Recognized the importance of coordination among parties, organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, and requested its Chair to explore ways of facilitating the coordination of the activities;

(g) Concluded that guidance from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action would facilitate further progress on methodological issues.

29. Accordingly, in order for the initiative to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation to be finalized, further negotiations are needed, including on technical, methodological and policy issues, such as the rights of stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples, and the opportunity costs of other land uses and forest management systems. There is also a concern that it should not put at a disadvantage those countries that have already taken steps to eliminate or reduce deforestation and to manage their forests sustainably, including through conserving carbon held in forests. Another concern repeatedly expressed by stakeholders is the need for a comprehensive approach to forests and sustainable forest management that goes beyond emission and carbon potentials of forests.

30. Most of the current investment in and financial flows to the forest sector are not directed at addressing climate change, and less than 25 per cent is invested in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Current financial and investment flows fall far short of what is needed in order for sustainable forest management to contribute to poverty alleviation, sustainable economic growth and the effective protection of critical environmental services in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.[14]

31. Reducing deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics has the biggest mitigation potential in the forest sector. The financial flow required for reducing

[14] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Investment and financial flows to address climate change* (Bonn, Germany, 2007), p. 78.

deforestation and forest degradation is estimated as the opportunity cost of converting forests to other land uses, which can differ from one country to another according to the direct drivers (commercial agriculture, subsistence farming and wood extraction).[15] Based on the Global Forest Resources Assessment update (FRA 2005) figure that 12.9 million hectares of forest cover were lost per year in the period from 2000 to 2005, it is estimated that the opportunity cost for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is $12.2 billion per year. This would result in a reduction of 5.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030.[16]

32. During the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali, the Government of Norway announced its willingness to provide $600 million annually towards efforts to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have established the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries with the short-term aim of working with countries in the development of national strategies to build monitoring, reporting and verification capacity. The Collaborative Programme is expected to provide inputs on experiences gained for negotiations in the context of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the negotiation of a new international climate change agreement that takes into account emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, which should be concluded at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Collaborative Programme is initiating quick-start actions for pilot projects in six developing countries — two each in Africa, Asia and Latin America.[17]

VI. Opportunities and challenges for the forest sector

A. Opportunities

33. Forests provide great opportunities for adaptation to climate change by increasing the resilience of people and ecosystems. They will also be a major mitigation option over the next 30 to 40 years and represent a necessary transitional measure towards a low-carbon economy. However, given the wide range of goods and services provided by forests, mitigation and adaptation options in the forest sector need to be fully understood and used in the context of promoting sustainable development. Moreover, if forests are to effectively contribute to climate change solutions, countries, and the international community as a whole, will need to address several critical governance issues affecting forests, including those relating to rights, tenure, access, land-use planning, benefit-sharing, institutional and cross-sectoral coordination and law enforcement.

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[15] Ibid., pp. 80 and 81.

[16] Ibid., table IV-35, p. 81.

[17] Communication to the Office of the Secretary-General from the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations, 21 July 2008.

34. CPF provides a unique opportunity for a more comprehensive strategic approach to addressing every aspect of sustainable forest management, including those aspects related to climate change. The strategic framework for forests and climate change proposed by CPF provides a strong argument in support of the strategic role that sustainable forest management can play in achieving long-term climate change mitigation and a robust and flexible framework for effective adaptation to climate change.

Key messages of the strategic framework for forests and climate change of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

The strategic framework for forests and climate change, prepared by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) for the eighth session of the Forum on Forests, provides a good foundation for discussing the issue of forests and climate change, including an analysis of mitigation and adaptation. It also addresses the key subject of the monitoring and verification of carbon stock in forests and emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The framework presents six messages to the international community:

Message 1: Sustainable forest management provides an effective framework for forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Message 2: Forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation measures should proceed concurrently.

Message 3: Intersectoral collaboration, economic incentives and the provision of alternative livelihoods are essential for reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

Message 4: Capacity-building and governance reforms are urgently required.

Message 5: Accurate forest monitoring and assessment helps informed decision-making but requires greater coordination at all levels.

Message 6: CPF members are committed to a collaborative and comprehensive approach to forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation.

35. Several CPF member organizations, including the World Bank, the International Tropical Timber Organization, FAO, UNEP and UNDP, are already mobilizing substantial funds in preparing for and implementing initiatives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. At the same time, however, the forest community needs to intensify its efforts to coordinate activities to address gaps and identify solutions. In this context, closer collaboration and cooperation between the Forum on Forests and CPF members would be desirable.

B. Constraints and challenges

36. The issue of forests and climate change is complicated and requires closer collaboration among leading players. For example, at its twenty-ninth session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice emphasized the need for further coordination of activities among parties, organizations and civil society. As the CPF strategic framework makes clear, intersectoral collaboration, economic incentives and the provision of alternative livelihoods are essential for reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

37. Opportunities for synergies in the context of reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation should be explored with a view to reinforcing the implementation of mitigation measures aimed at achieving such reductions and the promotion of sustainable forest management in developing countries (see E/CN.18/2008/2, sect. V).

38. One principal concern is the fact that, when one single good or service, among the many covered by sustainable forest management, attracts significant finance, there is a risk that it can distort or skew the goals of sustainable forest management to the detriment of other goods and services.

39. The development of a mechanism for reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation must be based on sound methodologies for estimating and monitoring changes in forest cover and associated carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions, incremental changes owing to the sustainable management of forests, and reductions in emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation. The methodological challenges involved have proved to be much more complicated for forest degradation than for deforestation. A workshop organized by the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change on methodological issues related to reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, held in Tokyo in 2008, concluded that addressing the issue of emissions from forest degradation was more difficult than addressing the issue of emissions from deforestation. It was also noted that there are different types of forest degradation, and some may be easier to measure than others (FCCC/SBSTA/2008/11, para. 46).

40. Many developing countries would need extensive capacity-building and training activities on monitoring, reporting and verification in order to be able to effectively apply the methodologies for estimating and monitoring carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Such an undertaking would require adequate financial resources. In addition, capacity-building, institutional development and training are needed for those countries not able to meet even the minimum requirements for sustainable forest management in the context of the objectives of the initiative, and even for those that are closer to achieving the capacity to incorporate monitoring, reporting and verification into their national processes.

41. The issue of forests and climate change affects a wide range of stakeholders, who need to be taken into account. The Forest Dialogue has brought many of those stakeholders together, and, in 2008, in a joint statement entitled "Beyond REDD: the role of forests in climate change", they expressed their concern that the implementation of measures for forest-related climate change mitigation and adaptation provides not only opportunities, but also risks for indigenous peoples and

other marginalized groups. Five principles were listed that should be considered in guiding post-2012 arrangements on climate change:

(a) Ensuring that forest-related climate change options support sustainable development in both forest-rich and forest-poor countries;

(b) Tackling the drivers of deforestation that lie outside the forest sector;

(c) Supporting transparent, inclusive and accountable forest governance;

(d) Encouraging local processes to clarify and strengthen tenure, property and carbon rights, giving full recognition to indigenous peoples, small-forest owners, the forest workplace and local communities;

(e) Providing substantial additional funding to build the capacity to put the above principles in practice.

C. Promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in national forest programmes

42. If mitigation and adaptation options in the forest sector are to be successful, they need to be fully understood and used in the context of promoting sustainable development.[18] Mitigation and adaptation strategies in response to climate change will need to be developed and integrated into national forest programmes and, in turn, into national development strategies. Innovative and emerging solutions are required, supported by economic policy instruments and public and private sector investment in sustainable forest management technologies and carbon sequestration approaches — many of which are already being used. The Forum on Forests, with the support of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, could contribute to such a process.

43. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defines mitigation as "An anthropogenic intervention to reduce the anthropogenic forcing of the climate system; it includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions and enhancing greenhouse gas sinks".[19] Mitigation measures for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the forest sector are promising. The Panel has identified a number of available technologies and practices: afforestation; reforestation; forest management; reduced deforestation; harvested wood production management; use of forest products for bioenergy and to replace fossil fuels; tree species improvement to increase biomass production and carbon sequestration; improved remote-sensing technologies for analysis of vegetation/soil carbon sequestration potential; and the mapping of land-use change.

44. The policy measures required are financial incentives to increase forest area, reduce deforestation, rehabilitate degraded forests, maintain and sustainably manage forests; and land-use regulation and enforcement. Such policies and corresponding mitigation measures would contribute to poverty alleviation.[4]

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[18] J. Blaser and C. Robledo, "Not for timber alone — the role of forests in climate change", presentation made at Washington, D.C., 2008.

[19] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, contribution of Working Group II to the fourth assessment report, 2007, appendix I.

45. Adaptation is defined by the Intergovernmental Panel as "Initiatives and measures to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects".[20] Adaptation is divided into three principal types: anticipatory adaptation, which refers to actions taken before the impacts of climate change are observed; autonomous adaptation, also known as spontaneous adaptation, which is not a conscious response but one that is prompted by ecological changes in natural systems or in human systems; and planned adaptation, which is the product of deliberate policy decisions, based on an awareness of changing conditions and that actions are required to return to, maintain or reach a desired state.[19] While mitigation measures aim to fix and maintain carbon, adaptation seeks to increase the resilience of people and ecosystems.[18]

46. According to the Intergovernmental Panel, key vulnerabilities exist in the short term in the form of drought, insects and fire. Models used by the Panel indicate that there will be significant forest dieback towards the end of this century and beyond in tropical, boreal and mountain areas, accompanied by the loss of key services. Losses of biodiversity are projected, particularly in tropical forest diversity hot spots such as north-eastern Amazonia and tropical Africa. Mountain forests are being affected, with a loss of high-altitude habitats.

47. Adaptation practices fall into three different temporal categories: responses to current variability, which can take advantage of lessons learned from past adaptations; responses to observed medium- and long-term climate trends; and anticipatory planning in response to model-based scenarios of long-term climate change.[21] Most practices in the forest sector fall under the first category and include:

(a) Season climate forecasting, as in the case of El Niño-Southern Oscillation;

(b) Disease surveillance systems;

(c) Regulation and rationing of the usage of water provided by forests;

(d) Strategies for drought and coastal management;

(e) Strategies for preventing and combating forest fires, including the construction of fire lines and controlled burning;

(f) Reforestation of mangroves;

(g) Utilization of drought and fire-resistant tree species, such as teak, in tropical forest plantations;

(h) Establishment of biological reserves and ecological corridors for protecting ecosystems from the impact of climate change;

(i) Compensation paid to forest owners for environmental services provided by those forests to society.

48. Adaptive capacity — the ability or potential of a system to respond successfully to climate change — is a prerequisite for the design and

[20] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report*, annex II, available at http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/ar4-syr.htm.

[21] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, chap. 17.2.

implementation of effective adaptation strategies. For most developing countries, capacity-building and technology transfer will be required. Successful adaptation to climate change is complex and can be difficult. Policy and planning processes need to take into account the fact that capacities for adaptation and the processes by which it occurs differ greatly within and across regions, countries, sectors and communities. Adaptation can be limited by the extent and rate of climate change, as well as by technological limitations, financial barriers, informational and cognitive barriers and social and cultural barriers. In most cases, adaptation is undertaken as part of broader social and development initiatives.[22]

49. Much of the focus on adaptation to climate change has been in the areas of energy demand, sea-level rise and coastal protection, water management, agriculture and infrastructure. Less attention has been paid to the forest sector. However, at its eighth session, the Forum on Forests will be afforded the opportunity to address this important issue in depth for the first time. Through the CPF global forest expert panel (formerly the joint initiative on science and technology), led by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, with the participation of FAO, UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Centre for International Forestry Research, the World Agroforestry Centre and the Forum secretariat, and following consultations during the seventh session of the Forum in 2007 and the twelfth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, also in 2007, an expert panel on adaptation of forests to climate change has been established. The task of the expert panel is to assess the state of knowledge on the adaptation of forests and forest-dependent people to climate change. The assessment report, which includes current information about environmental and socio-economic impacts and vulnerabilities, as well as policy and management options for adaptation, has been prepared as a contribution to the discussion at the eighth session of the Forum under the agenda item "Forests in a changing environment", specifically under the sub-item "Forests and climate change".[23]

VII. Conclusions

50. **There is increasing evidence that climate change is seriously affecting forests throughout the world. Boreal, temperate, subtropical and tropical forests, including mangroves, are at risk throughout the world.**

51. **Forests are important for sustainable development, societal well-being and the provision of key environmental services. Climate change imposes additional stresses on millions of people on the Earth who depend on forests to different degrees for their livelihoods, shelter, food and water and, in particular, on the forest-dependent poor, who are already highly vulnerable.**

52. **Carbon, thought to be a leading element contributing to global warming, is stored in large amounts in forest ecosystems, which in 2005 were estimated to contain 638 billion tons of carbon. The amount of carbon in forests is greater than the amount of carbon currently in the atmosphere.**

[22] Ibid., chap 17.4.

[23] See www.iufro.org/publications/view/article/2008/policies-and-instruments-for-the-adaptation-of-forests-and-the-forest-sector-to-impacts-of-climate-c/.

53. **Deforestation and forest degradation are the primary drivers of carbon emissions from forests, accounting in 2004 for 17.4 per cent of total human-generated carbon dioxide emissions.**

54. **By contributing to forest degradation and deforestation, climate change is also exacerbating the release of carbon dioxide and further compounding global warming.**

55. **Although forests can play an important role in addressing climate change, agreement on that role has been a continuing process in the negotiations and implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Forests have great potential to contribute to the overall climate change strategy.**

56. **More recently, the issue of forests has been receiving attention in climate change negotiations, in particular with respect to the need for reductions in developing countries' emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation, which account for 35 per cent of emissions in developing countries and 65 per cent in the least developed countries.**

57. **The Bali Action Plan noted the importance of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in 2009, is expected to reach agreement on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, which will have a long-term impact on forest management and financial flows to forests in the future.**

58. **In addressing the issue of forests and climate change, care must be taken to consider the full scope of forests in sustainable development. Forests provide much more than the carbon sequestration valued in the context of climate change, and care should be taken so that that one issue does not dominate the global forest agenda.**

59. **The best opportunity for the Forum on Forests and its member States to contribute to the global climate change agenda appears to be through the promotion of sustainable forest management, including mitigation and adaptation measures related to climate change. Sustainable forest management can also contribute to addressing other environmental, social and economic challenges. In this context, the outcome of the negotiations under the Forum on financing sustainable forest management could contribute substantively to the ongoing climate change negotiations.**

60. **The Collaborative Partnership on Forests provides a unique opportunity for a more comprehensive strategic approach to addressing every aspect of sustainable forest management, including those aspects related to climate change.**